The Vision of Tnugdal

translated from Latin by

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with an introduction by

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Historical background

The *Vision of Tnugdal* is one of the great twelfth-century Latin visions of the otherworld. It was written in 1149 at Ratisbon (Regensburg, the old capital of Bavaria, South Germany) by brother Marcus, an Irish monk. The vision occurred when Tnugdal, a knight from Cashel, fell into a sort of coma while dining in Cork with a friend whom he was visiting in order to collect a debt. While this story belongs to the medieval European literature of visions which has inherited the pagan traditions of the voyage to the otherworld and the Judeo-Christian apocalyptic visions,[1] it is also an Irish production and cannot be fully appreciated if not understood in its Celtic context.[2]

This Vision has enjoyed great fame. There are one hundred and fifty-four manuscripts of the Latin text, dating from the twelfth to the nineteenth century, scattered all over Europe but located mainly in Germany and Austria. Moreover, there are some hundred manuscripts of the translated text in most European languages (Anglo-Norman, Belorussian, Catalan, Dutch, English, French, German, Icelandic, Irish, Italian, Portuguese, Provençal, Serbo-Croat, Spanish and Swedish).[3] Some of these early translations have been edited by scholars[4] but the Latin text is accessible only through the critical edition published by A. Wagner in 1882.[5] We offer an English translation of this text.

1. See, for instance, F. Bar, *Les Routes de l'Autre Monde* (Paris: P.U.F. 1946); H.R. Patch, *The Other World according to descriptions in medieval literature* (New York 1970); *Le Jugement des Morts*, Sources Orientales IV, (Paris: Seuil 1961); J. Le Goff, *La Naissance du Purgatoire* (Paris: Gallimard 1981).
2. This was also the thesis of St J.D. Seymour, 'Studies in the Vision of Tundal', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 37 C (1926) 87-106.
3. N.F. Palmer, *Visio Tnugdali. The German and Dutch Translations and their Circulation in the Later Middle Ages* (München-Zürich: Artemis Verlag 1982) 1-32.
4. See the bibliography given by N.F. Palmer, *op. cit.*, 430-433.
5. A. Wagner (ed.), *Visio Tnugdali Lateinisch und Altdeutsch* (Erlangen: A. Deichert 1882).

In the prologue, the author of the *Vision of Tnugdal* calls himself *frater Marcus*. His first words dedicate his work to the abbess 'G', who asked him to put the vision in written form. Thanks to Alber, a Bavarian monk who at the end of the twelfth century translated the *Vision of Tnugdal* into German verse,[6] we learn that a good monk brought the account to the town of Ratisbon and went to a convent of nuns called St Paul. Further on, Alber — who dedicates his work to a *bruoder Kuonrât* of *Winneberge* — says that he wrote the story at the request of three ladies, Otegebe, Heilke and Gisel.[7]

There was in Ratisbon a congregation of Irish Benedictine monks which became the nucleus of a group of monasteries in South Germany known as the *Schottenklöster*, originally 'the monasteries of the Irish' but understood later as 'the monasteries of the Scots'. The coming of the Irish to Ratisbon in the eleventh century occurred as a result of the sudden increase in the practice of pilgrimage. The community was started in 1076 when the abbess of Obermünster offered to Muredach Mac Robartaigh, known as Marianus Scottus, and his companions the small church of Weih St Peter, a dependency of her monastery. The Irish community increased quickly and moved about the year 1087 to the site of a new church of St James which in 1112 was certified by

6. A. Wagner, *ibid.*, l; N.F. Palmer, *op. cit.*, 37.
7. A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 122 and 123:

sît brâht ez ein münich guot
ze Regensburg in die stat.
dô wîsete in daz phat
ze einer samenungen,
dâ sint vrouwen nunnen,
von sante Paul ist ez genant:
dâ schreip erz mit sîner hant. (vv. 44-50)

Nû schribe wirz ze diute
durch die ungelêrten liute,
den alten mit den jungen
ze einer bezzerunge,
und daz dez müezen gniezen
die ez scrîben hiezen:
daz sint dise frouwen drî,
Otegebe, Heilke und Gisel dâ bî. (vv. 63-70)

Henry V as an independent monastery. The Benedictine rule was adopted at the time of the election of the first abbot.[8]

The abbess 'G', to whom Marcus dedicates his work, was — from the evidence given by Alber — identified with 'Gisela'.[9] E. Schröder, L.L. Hammerich and N.F. Palmer do not think that Alber's Gisel and Marcus' abbess 'G' are the same person. The three names given by Alber occur in the Windberg Necrology, which suggests that Alber translated the vision for three nuns of Windberg. *Bruoder Kuonrât*, moreover, could be rightly identified with Konrad I, abbot of Windberg (1191-1203).[10] However, H. Spilling following J. Geier has demonstrated from a discovered 'Traditionbuch' of the Convent of St Paul at Ratisbon the existence of an abbess named Gisela who headed the monastery from 1140 to 1160. A memory list proves that she was generous towards the monastery of St James.[11] Indeed the death of a 'Gisila', abbess of St Paul, Ratisbon, is mentioned three times under the date 25 February in different Necrologies (*Necrologium Monasterii s. Emmerammi Ratisbonensis, Necrologium monasterii superioris Ratisbonensis* and *Necrologium Windbergense*).[12] She could well be the lady to whom Marcus dedicates his work.

It seems strange that Marcus lived in a convent of nuns. According to O. Doerr, the only possibility would be that he stayed there as an

8. P.A. Breatnach, 'The Origins of the Irish Monastic Tradition at Ratisbon (Regensburg)', *Celtica*, 13 (1980) 58-77; D.A. Binchy, 'The Irish Benedictine Congregation in Medieval Germany', *Studies*, 18 (1929) 194-210; V.H. Friedel and K. Meyer, *La Vision de Tondale (Tnudgal)* (Paris: Champion 1907) xv-xviii; H. Spilling, *Die Visio Tnugdali* (München: Arbeo-Gesellschaft 1975) 11-13.
9. A. Wagner, *op. cit.*, xxiv; V.H. Friedel and K. Meyer, *op. cit.*, xv; R. Verdeyen and J. Endepols, *Tondalus' Visioen en St Patricius' Vagevuur* (Ghent 1914-1917) vol. I, 66; St J.D. Seymour, 'Studies in the Vision of Tundal', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 37 C (1926) 91.
10. N.F. Palmer, *op. cit.*, 36-37; E. Schröder, 'Alber von Windberg', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 50 (1908) 391-392; L.L. Hammerich, 'Bruder Marcus', *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, 1st ed., vol. III, K. Langosch (ed.), (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1943) col. 228.
11. H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 18-19; J. Geier, 'Das Traditionsbuch des Klosters St Paul in Regensburg', *Verhandlungen des Historischen Vereins für Oberpfalz und Regensburg*, 111 (1971) 169-171.
12. F.L. Bauman (ed.), *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Necrologiae Germaniae*, vol. III, (München 1983) 307, 337, 387.

inclusus.[13] But H. Spilling remarks that the Irish *inclusi* are not mentioned after they obtained their monastery, that Alber's testimony does not go very far and that therefore there is very little reason to believe that Marcus did not stay in the monastery of St James or St Peter.[14] Indeed, there is a phrase in the prologue which expresses a spatial distance and which suggests that Marcus was not in the convent of St Paul. When dedicating his work to the abbess he writes:

> . . . *vestreque diligentie mitteremus transscribendum.* (. . . we should send it to you for copying under your vigilance.)[15]

Another argument is that Tnugdal, when in the otherworld, meets people who were particularly meaningful to the brethren of the Schottenklöster. He encounters Saint Rúadán, one of the Munster saints venerated in the Irish Benedictine communities in Germany.[16] There is also Nemias, bishop of Cloyne,[17] who seems to be the *Nemias ep(is)c(opus) et mo(nachus) n(ost)re congr(egationis)* mentioned on 7 April in the so-called Wessobrunn calendar fragment composed at the *Schottenkloster* of Würzburg, a daughter house of the monastery of St James at Ratisbon founded in 1138,[18] and the same Nemias who on 7 April is also referred to in the Necrology of the *Schottenkloster* of Würzburg as *ep(iscopus) et mon(achus) Hyberni(ae)*.[19] As the priory of Ross Carbery was a daughter house of Würzburg,[20] it is possible that

13. H. Spilling, *op. cit*, 14-15, mentions O. Doerr, 'Das Institut der Inclusen in Süddeutschland', *Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens*, 18 (1934) 104.
14. H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 15 note 43.
15. A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 4; see below p. 109.
16. A. Dold, 'Wessobrunner Kalendarblätter irischen Ursprungs', *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, 58 (1962) 24; D. Ó Riain Raedel, 'Aspects of the Promotion of Irish Saints' Cults in Medieval Germany', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 39 (1982) 230.
17. His Irish name is Gilla-na-naemh Ua Muirchertaigh. Nemias is possibly the latinized form of Naemh. In the *Vita Malachiae* XXI,41, St Bernard — under the influence of the Bible — calls him Nehemias. See the *Annals of Inisfallen* S. Mac Airt (ed. and tr.), (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies 1951) par. 171, 7.
18. A. Dold, *op. cit.*, 23-24.
19. D. Ó Riain-Raedel, 'Irish Kings and bishops in the *memoria* of the German *Shottenkloster*', *Ireland and Europe*, P. Ní Chatháin and M. Richter (eds), (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1984) 392-393 and 'Aspects of the Promotion of Irish Saints' Cult in Medieval Germany', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 39 (1982) 228.
20. A. Gwynn and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses. Ireland* (London: Longman

Nemias, bishop of Cloyne, may have been a monk in Würzburg and the founder of the priory of Ross Carbery.[21] The three kings whom Tnugdal meets, Conchober, Donachus and Cormachus, have been identified respectively with Conchobhar Ua Briain (from 1118 to 1142 king of Thomond, the northern half of Munster), Donnchadh Mac Carthaigh and Cormac Mac Carthaigh (Donnchadh's brother who from 1124 to 1138 was king of Desmond, the southern half of Munster). At the time when Marcus was at Ratisbon, the third abbot of St James was Christanus Mac Carthaigh, a kinsman of these kings. Furthermore, in the *Libellus de fundacione ecclesie Consecrati Petri*, written in Germany by an Irishman between 1250 and 1261, there is the story of a delegation of monks from Ratisbon sent to Conchobhar[22] to collect some money for the foundation of Weih St Peter (see Appendix). The *Libellus* recalls also the generosity of a king Donatus towards a second expedition to Ireland, led after 1142 by the same Christanus Mac Carthaigh.[23] But if Marcus was a monk at St James, why does he not name his abbot? According to the *Libellus*, Christanus led the second

1970; reprinted Dublin: Irish Academic Press 1988), 107; A. Gwynn, 'Ireland and Würzburg in the Middle Ages', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 78 (1952) 401-411; J. Coombes, 'The Benedictine Priory of Ross', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 73 (1968) 152-161.

21. The anonymous author of 'Scottish Religious Houses abroad', in *Edinburgh Review*, 119 (1854) 174, writes: 'The monastery of St Mary the Virgin at Ross-ailithir, or Ross-Carbery, was founded by Nehemias Scotus, first a monk of St James Würzburg and then Bishop of Ross'. As the author does not give his source, it seems that he did not know that Nemias was bishop of Cloyne and that he assumed that Nemias was bishop of Ross, since he may have founded Ross Carbery. P.B. Gams, *Series Episcoporum Ecclesiae Catholicae* (Graz 1957, reprint of 1873 ed.), 213, names Nehemiah O'Moriertach as bishop of Cloyne and Ross 1140- c.1149. A bishop of Ross was not named as present at the synod of Kells, but a bishopric of *Rosailithir* appeared among the suffragan sees of Cashel in Cardinal Paparo's list: see A. Gwynn and R.N. Hadcock, *op. cit.*, 65 and 96. It is quite possible that a bishopric of Ross existed before the synod of Kells, as did the bishopric of Cloyne. But we do not know who the bishop of Ross was at this period. As the bishoprics of Cloyne and Ross were joined in the fifteenth century, this may have been the reason why Gams believed that Nemias was bishop of Cloyne and Ross, unless Gams was influenced by the article mentioned above.
22. P.A. Breatnach (ed.), *Die Regensburger Schottenlegende — Libellus de fundacione ecclesie Consecrati Petri* (München: Arbeo-Gesellschaft 1977) 3-13.
23. *Ibid.*, 254-256. The identification of the Donatus of the *Libellus* has caused difficulties. J. Lanigan, *An Ecclesiastical History of Ireland* (Dublin 1822) vol. IV, 156, argued that the king Donatus mentioned was Toirrdelbach Ua Briain, Conchobhar's brother. This was also the opinion of D.A. Binchy, 'The Irish Benedictine Congregation in

expedition to Ireland and died during his stay. As his death could only have occurred after 29 November 1148,[24] it is possible that the abbot of St James was in Ireland when Marcus was at Ratisbon writing the *Vision of Tnugdal*. If Christanus, for the time of his absence in Ireland, had entrusted the abbess with the care of his monastery, this would explain the ambiguity of Marcus' situation with regard to his abbot and therefore his silence.

The request of the abbess is particularly interesting when one considers the two main literary figures of the contemporary monastic milieu of Germany. Honorius Augustodunensis (1080?- 1158?) lived in Ratisbon and dedicated some of his works to abbot Christanus Mac Carthaigh and to his successor, abbot Gregorius.[25] Honorius, in connection with Christanus' request for the *Imago Mundi*, is even described in the *Annales Palidenses* as Christanus' friend:

> *. . . familiaris suus quidam nomine Christianus quae praescripta sunt petiit et impetravit.* (. . . one of his close friends called Christ(i)anus asked and obtained what has been written above.)[26]

Medieval Germany', *Studies*, 18 (1929) 200. But this has been contested by P.A. Breatnach, *op. cit.*, 63, and F. Shaw, 'Karl der Große und die Schottischen Heiligen', *Medium Aevum*, 45 (1976) 172, who thought that Donatus was rather Cormac's brother. D.A. Binchy reconsidered the problem and offered the suggestion that this second expedition could only have taken place during the reign of king Cormac and that Donatus could have been Cormac's nephew Donnchadh, the son of his elder brother and predecessor Tadhg. (See D.A. Binchy, Review of P.A. Breatnach's *Die Regensburg Schottenlegende* in *Celtica*, 14 (1981) 158-161.) In any case the first part of this hypothesis does not accord with the *Libellus*, which states that Christanus Mac Carthaigh, who led the second expedition, came after the death of Conchobhar which occurred in 1142, four years after the death of Cormac. The *Libellus* also declares that Christanus died during his stay in Ireland. His death could only have occurred after 29 November 1148, the date on which he is mentioned in a bull of Eugenius III. Donnchadh, Cormac's brother, had died in 1144. So Binchy's suggestion — that the king who received Christanus was Donnchadh, Cormac's nephew — stands, but not for the reason he gives.

24. See note 23.

25. J.A. Endres, *Honorius Augustodunensis* (Munich: Kempten 1906); E. Matthews Sanford, 'Honorius, Presbyter and Scholasticus', *Speculum*, 23 (1948) 397-425; Y. Lefèvre, *L'Elucidarium et les Lucidaires* (Paris: E. de Boccard 1954) 214-222; M-O. Garrigues, 'Quelques recherches sur l'oeuvre d'Honorius Augustodunensis', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 70(2) (1975) 388-425.

26. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* XVI, 52, (J-M. Picard's translation); V.I.J. Flint, 'The Career of Honorius Augustodunensis', *Revue Bénédictine*, 82 (1972) 63-86.

He often dealt with the subject of the otherworld. His first book, the *Elucidarium*, written at the beginning of the twelfth century in England in the context of the late eleventh-century movement for the reform of the clergy, was extremely popular.[27] In the third part of this book he treated of the conditions of the future life (*De futura Vita*) and described the otherworld in a rather realistic manner. In further works he came back to this question but, influenced by his reading of Johannes Scottus Eriugena (810-877), tended to emphasize a spiritual understanding of the beyond.[28] Another important figure was Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) who, when Marcus arrived at Ratisbon, was abbess of the monastery of Disibodenberg. By 1149 she was completing the *Scivias* (1141-1151), the first part of her huge visionary triptych. A year before, at the synod of Treves, which was presided over by Pope Eugene III and at which St Bernard assisted, not only had her gift of vision been recognized but she had been encouraged to make her visions known.[29] Seen in this context, Marcus' arrival at Ratisbon with a story of a vision of the otherworld must have been very appealing to the abbess.

THE DATE OF THE VISION AND THE DATE OF MARCUS' WORK

At the end of the prologue, Marcus gives 1149 as the date when the vision was seen.[30] To justify this, he mentions four events.

1) *. . . the second year of the expedition to Jerusalem of Conrad, king of the Romans. . .*[31] Conrad of Hohenstaufen set out in May 1147 from

27. V.I.J. Flint, 'The "Elucidarium" of Honorius Augustodunensis and Reform in late eleventh century England', *Revue Bénédictine*, 85 (1975) 178-198.

28. J.A. Endres, *op. cit.*, 95-97; D.N. Bell, 'The basic source of the "Scala Coeli Major" of Honorius Augustodunensis', *Revue Bénédictine*, 88 (1978) 163-170.

29. H. Schipperges, *Hildegard von Bingen* (Olten/Freiburg: Walter-Verlag 1980); Hildegard de Bingen, *Le Livre des Oeuvres Divines*, B. Gorceix (tr.), (Paris: Albin Michel 1982) xvi- xxvii.

30. A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 4-5 and below p. 110:

> *Visa est namque ipsa visio millesimo centesimo quadragesimo nono ab incarnatione domini anno . . .* (This vision was seen in the year one thousand and forty-nine from the Incarnation of the Lord . . .).

31. *Ibid.*, 5:

> *. . . qui est annus secundus Chunradi regis Romanorum expeditionis Hierosolimorum . . .*

Ratisbon for the second Crusade and returned to Germany in May 1149.[32] So the second year would be May 1148 — May 1149.[33]

2) . . . *the fourth year of the pontificate of Pope Eugenius II, the same year as he returned to Rome from the regions of Gaul.*[34] It is agreed that Marcus meant Eugenius III (Eugenius II lived in the ninth century). Eugenius III was elected Pope on 15 February 1144.[35] His fourth year in the papacy was 15 February 1148 — 14 February 1149.[36] Since the Pope ended his fourth year in the papacy on 14 February 1149, the vision must have been seen not later than this date. With regard to the Pope's return to Rome, he left Clairvaux in April 1148, was at Lausanne on 20 May, at Pavia on 30 June, reached Viterbo on 30 November 1148 and arrived at Rome on 28 November 1149.[37] It would seem that Marcus was ignorant of the real duration of the Pope's journey and thought that he was back in Rome before 15 February 1149.

3) *Also in the same year Malachy, bishop of Down and legate to the Irish . . . died at Clairvaux on his way to Rome. His life, full of miracles, is being written in magnificent style by Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux.*[38]

32. V.H. Friedel and K. Meyer, *op. cit.*, IX, thought that Conrad came back in 1148.

33. As St J.D. Seymour, *op. cit.*, 92-93, and J.C.D. Marshall, 'Three problems in *The Vision of Tnugdal*', *Medium Aevum*, 44 (1975) 17, think that Marcus employs the calendar year, they conclude that the second year is January- December 1148. R. Krebs, 'Zu den Tundalusvisionen des Marcus und Alber', *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch*, 12 (1977) 168, followed H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 25, who was the first to count the Crusade years as one would date regnal years. See E. Gardiner, 'A Solution to the Problem of dating in the *Vision of Tundale*', *Medium Aevum*, 51 (1982) 87, who also thinks that this is the correct method of dating.

34. A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 5:

    . . . quique est quartus annus Eugenii pape II, quo anno de Galliarum partibus Romam est reversus.

35 St J.D. Seymour, *op. cit.*, 93, was misled because he thought that the Pope was elected in 1145.

36. H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 25; R. Krebs, *op. cit.*, 168; and E. Gardiner, *op. cit.*, 87, agree on this dating while V.H. Friedel and K. Meyer, *op. cit.*, X, and J.C.D. Marshall, *op. cit.*, 17, think (using the calendar year) that the fourth year is 1148.

37. H.J. Lawlor, 'Notes on St Bernard's Life of St Malachy, and his two sermons on the passing of St Malachy', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 35 C (1918-1920) 259; H.K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes in the Middle Ages* (London: Kegan Paul 1914) vol. IX, 156-162.

38. A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 5:

    Ipso etiam eodem anno Malachias Dunensis episcopus Hyberniensium legatus . . . Romam veniens in Claravalle defunctus est, cujus vitam miraculis plenam Bernhardus Clarevallis abbas satis luculento sermone transscribit.

Map 1

St Malachy (Maol Maodhóg Ua Morgair), bishop of Connor, archbishop of Armagh (1132-1137), bishop of Down (1137-1148) and papal legate (1140-1148), died in the arms of his friend St Bernard on 2 November 1148. This would justify H.J. Lawlor's assumption that St Bernard immediately began to write *The Life of St Malachy* and must have finished it in the first few weeks of January because the saint also thought that the Pope was already back in Rome.[39] Working from a different source, V.H. Friedel was also of the opinion that St Bernard had finished writing the Life at the beginning of 1149.[40]

4) *In the same year also, Nemias, bishop of Cloyne . . . departed . . . at ninety-five years of age.*[41] His death is the first item mentioned in the *Annals of the Four Masters* for the year 1149:

> Gilla-na-naemh Ua Muirchertaigh, noble bishop of the south of Ireland, a chaste, wise and pious senior . . . died after penance and intense penitence.

Critics have always been struck by the fact that Marcus on the one hand gives the specific date 1149 and on the other refers to an event (Malachy's death) which could only have happened in 1148. A. Wagner and St J.D. Seymour thought that Marcus meant 1148 and not 1149,

39. H.J. Lawlor, *op. cit.*, 249 and 259-260. When St Bernard tells of Malachy's last journey to Clairvaux he writes that if Malachy had not been delayed by the king of England, who did not allow him to cross to France, he would have followed the Pope and that when Malachy was able to cross the Channel Eugenius was already at or near Rome. See R.T. Meyer (tr.), *Bernard of Clairvaux. The Life and Death of Saint Malachy the Irishman* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications 1978) 87:

> XXX, 69: Had he crossed over right away he would have had to bypass Clairvaux in order to follow the Supreme Pontiff. By that time he had already left and was at Rome or at least close to Rome.

According to Lawlor's calculations, Malachy would have reached the continent towards the end of September 1148. The Pope in fact had not even reached Viterbo.

40. Friedel, in V.H. Friedel and K. Meyer, *op. cit.*, VII note 1, quotes *Xenia Bernardina* (Vienna 1891) vol. IV, p. iv note 11:

> Liber de vita et rebus gestis S. Malachiae Hiberniae episcopi *statim* post ejus mortem (II Nov. 1148) scribi coeptus et *initio* anni 1149 absolutus.

41. A. Wagner, *op. cit.*, 5:

> *Nemias etiam Cluenensis episcopus, vir sapientia et genere et sanctitate preclarus, sanctus ac venerabilis senex annorum nonaginta quinque in propria cathedra eodem anno de laborioso hujus vite certamine ad gaudia migravit perpetue vite.* See translation below p. 110.

for after all there was already a clerical mistake with Eugenius II instead of Eugenius III. They therefore try to prove that the other events belong to 1148.[42] In the opinion of J.C.D. Marshall, the date given by Marcus 'is a literary device which lends authenticity to the account while affording a gracious compliment to Malachy and Nehemiah whose souls are alleged to have been seen in heaven at a time immediately subsequent to their deaths.'[43]

Other critics have accepted the fact that Marcus meant 1149. With the exception of V.H. Friedel, who tries to justify the year 1149 by giving a psychological explanation,[44] they rely on the evidence that for Marcus the beginning of the year must have been before January. A. Mussafia has suggested that Marcus calculated the beginning of the year from 1 September,[45] one of the two Roman dates that were in use in the Middle Ages for this purpose.[46] E. Gardiner and N.F. Palmer have supposed that, since Marcus explicitly writes *ab Incarnatione Domini anno*, he may have calculated the year in accordance with the fashion of the *Calculus Pisanus* which reckons from 25 March before Christ.[47] This suggestion has been accepted as a likely solution to the problem.[48] However, while the practice of counting the beginning of the year from 25 March in the fashion of the *Calculus Florentinus* (that is, almost three months after 1 January) was quite common in Europe — in England for instance it was adopted from the mid-twelfth century —

42. A. Wagner, *op. cit.*, 25; St J.D. Seymour, *op. cit.*, 92-94.

43. J.C.D. Marshall, *op. cit.*, 18.

44. V.H. Friedel, *op. cit.*, xi:

> Les événements mémorables ne lui sont parvenus là-bas qu'avec retard, de sorte qu'à son arrivée dans l'Europe centrale, n'ayant guère le temps de s'orienter, il cite comme récents des faits qui, en réalité, datent de quelques mois en arrière.

45. A. Mussafia, 'Sulla Visione di Tundale', *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-hist., 67 (Wien 1871) 157 note 2.

46. R.D. Ware, 'Medieval Chronology: Theory and Practice', *Medieval Studies. An Introduction*, J.M. Powell (ed.), (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press 1976) 220-221.

47. E. Gardiner, 'A solution to the problem of the dating in the *Vision of Tundale*', *Medium Aevum*, 51 (1982) 86-91; N.F. Palmer, *op. cit.*, 11 note 5.

48. R. Mearns, *The Vision of Tundale* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter-Universitatsverlag 1985) 15 (I am grateful to Dr Angela Lucas and Dr Peter Lucas for having brought this book to my attention.); N.F. Palmer, 'Bruder Marcus', *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd ed., vol. V, K. Ruh and others (eds), (Berlin-New York: Walter de Gruyter 1985) col. 1231.

and was often indicated by the term *anni ab Incarnatione*, the *Calculus Pisanus* (which made the year begin some nine months before 1 January) does not seem to have been used outside Italy.[49] Therefore it seems quite improbable that Marcus used the *Calculus Pisanus*. On the contrary, he must have calculated time in a way which was more familiar to him.

L.L. Hammerich has already suggested that for Marcus the year started on 1 November.[50] But nobody took him seriously. Considering the tenacity of customs in Irish life, however, one cannot exclude the possibility of the survival of the old Celtic tradition according to which the year began on the feast of Samain, that is 1 November. And *ab Incarnatione Domini anno* would therefore coincide with the fact that the Celts calculated the age of a person from conception rather than birth.[51] Caesar had already noticed the precedence of night over day among the Gauls. He states:

> . . . *spatia omnis temporis non numero dierum sed noctium finiunt; dies natales et mensum et annorum initia sic observant ut noctem dies subsequatur.* (. . . they determined all periods of time by the number not of days, but of nights; and in their observance of birthdays and the beginning of months and years day follows night): *De Bello Gallico* VI,18.[52]

The same conception of time is found in the *Vision of Tnugdal*. Marcus writes that Tnugdal spent three nights with his friend before discussing money matters:

> *Qui cum bene receptus perendinaret tribus noctibus, cepit tractare de ceteris rebus.* (He was made most welcome and stayed there for three nights before he started discussing the matter outstanding.)[53]

Further on, when meaning what would nowadays be described as a one day old infant, Marcus writes 'a one night old infant':

> *Nemo enim liber est a peccato nec infans unius nocti . . .* (No one is exempt from sin, not even a one night old infant . . .)[54]

This is all the more interesting when compared to St Augustine's expression (*Confessions* I,7):

> . . . *quoniam nemo mundus a peccato coram te, nec infans, cuius est unius diei vita super terram.* (. . . for in Thy sight none is pure from sin, not even the infant whose life is but a day upon earth.)[55]

Samain was the point at which the old year and the new year met. At this time the boundary between the otherworld and this world disappeared. The mounds and graves opened and their inhabitants emerged and became visible to people.[56] Writing of the three days of ritual celebration of Samain, F. Le Roux states that 'the respect for debts to be paid to the infernal powers is proper during these days'.[57] Samain was in fact the time when debts were paid. In the *Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language*, it is mentioned that Samain is found in legal language 'as a date used in assessing age and therefore value of animals' and also as a date used in relation to payment due for animals.[58] So when Tnugdal went to collect the price of his three horses which had been settled in an exchange contract, it must have been at Samain.

49. A. Giry, *Manuel de Diplomatique* (Paris: Hachette 1894) 108:
    > Ce mode tout à fait exceptionnel de compter les années a cependant été employé en dehors de Pise, dans quelques villes de Toscane, à Pistoia, à Sienne etc . . . et a été choisi par la chancellerie de quelques papes du XIIe siècle.
50. L. Hammerich, 'Bruder Marcus', *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, 1st ed., vol. III, K. Langosch (ed.), (Berlin-Leipzig 1943) vol. III, col. 228.
51. C. Lainé-Kerjean, 'Le Calendrier Celtique', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 23 (1943) 257-258; J. Loth, 'L'Année Celtique d'après les textes irlandais, gallois, bretons et le calendrier de Coligny', *Revue Celtique*, 25 (1904) 113-162.
52. Caesar, *The Gallic War*, H.J. Edwards (tr.), The Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann 1917).
53. *Ibid.*, 7; and see below p. 112.
54. *Ibid.*, 26; and see below p. 128.
55. E.B. Pusey (tr.), (London: Everyman's Library 1966).
56. See A. Rees and B. Rees, *Celtic Heritage. Ancient tradition in Ireland and Wales* (London: Thames and Hudson 1961) 83-92.
57. F. Le Roux, 'Le calendrier gaulois de Coligny (Ain) et la fête irlandaise de Samain (*Samonios)', *Ogam*, 9 (1957) 340: 'Bien plus que le rite religieux, la stricte observance des règles ancestrales, le respect des dettes à payer aux puissances infernales est de mise pendant ces trois jours critiques.'
58. *Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy 1953) Letter S.

From the ecclesiastical point of view 1 November was also an important date. In the *Rule of St Benedict*, in which the year is divided into two periods (winter and summer), 1 November marked the beginning of the winter vigils[59] with regard to which A. de Vogüé writes: 'The Calends of November, the beginning of the winter vigils in the *Rule of St Benedict*, play an analogous role in the Augustinian *ordo monasterii* (the start of the four months during which the night office is the longest) and in that of Columbanus and his disciple Donatus'.[60] Therefore the traditional Celtic understanding of time was not obsolete in the ecclesiastical environment in which Marcus lived.

One can even be more precise with regard to the time when the vision was seen. Marcus declares that the vision occurred after 2 November (the date of Malachy's death) and that Tnugdal waited for three nights before asking for his money back:

> *Hic igitur, cum multos haberet amicos sodales, inter eos unum habuerat, qui ei commutationis debito trium equorum debitor erat. Hic cum statutum prestolaretur terminum, suum transacto tempore convenit amicum. Qui cum bene receptus perendinaret tribus noctibus, cepit tractare de ceteris rebus.* (Tnugdal had many cronies among whom one was his debtor in an exchange contract and owed him three horses. He waited for the final limit which had been set for repayment and, when the time had elapsed, he went to visit his friend. He was made most welcome and stayed there for three nights before he started discussing the matter outstanding.)[61]

It is also stated that the vision took place from a Wednesday at 4 p.m. to a Saturday at the same time:

> *Ab hora quasi decima in quarta feria usque ad eandem ipsam horam in sabbato mortuus jacebat nullo in eo remanente vite signo, excepto . . .* (From about the tenth hour on Wednesday until the very same hour on Saturday he lay dead with no sign of life remaining in him except . . .)[62]

If 1 November was the time when Tnugdal should have been paid, he must have arrived in Cork the day before. Therefore the vision must have occurred between the 3rd and the 6th of November. This agrees with the fact that in 1148 the first of November fell on a Monday.[63]

It has been accepted by critics that Marcus began to write the *Vision* in Latin as soon as he reached Ratisbon and that consequently the date of the composition could be assigned to 1149. J.C.D. Marshall has challenged this and thinks that the composition took place 'four or more years after 1149'. He argues, in the first place, that when Marcus states that St Bernard *transcribit* the *Life of Malachy*, the tense of *transcribit* is to be understood as an historical present. If Marshall is right, this means that Marcus does not respect the concordance of tenses. But, according to J-M. Picard, Marcus' syntax is generally correct. In this context, therefore, the tense must refer to a contemporary action. Marshall's second argument relies on Marcus' description of the ecclesiastical structure of Ireland:

> *Hec ergo insula civitates habet precipuas triginta quattuor, quarum presules duobus subsunt metropolitanis.* (This island has thirty-four dioceses, the bishops of which are under two metropolitans.)[64]

He thinks that this number of thirty-four dioceses is anachronistic when compared to the twenty-four bishoprics and two archiepiscopal sees created at the synod of Rathbreasail in 1111[65] and to the list of thirty-four suffragan sees approved for the four archbishoprics (Armagh, Cashel, Dublin and Tuam) by Cardinal Paparo, papal legate at

59. 13 September was the beginning of winter fasting and 1 October of winter work. Summer started with Easter.

60. A. de Vogüé, 'Les Divisions du temps: L'année et les saisons', in the Introduction to *La Règle de St Benoît* (Paris: Ed. du Cerf 1972) vol. I, 81-90: 'Point de départ des vigiles d'hiver dans la *Règle de St Benoît*, les Calendes de Novembre jouent un rôle analogue dans l'*ordo monasterii* augustinien (début des quatre mois où l'office nocturne est le plus long), ainsi que chez Colomban et son disciple Donat'.

61. A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 7; and see below p. 112.

62. *Ibid.*, 8; and below p. 113.

63. See C.R. Cheney, *Handbook of dates for Students of English History* (London 1978) 124-125.

64. A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 6; and see below p. 111.

65. See S.J. Mac Erlean, 'Synod of Ráith Breasail', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 3 (1914) 1-4.

the synod of Kells in 1152.[66] Indeed this list mentions for the northern half of Ireland ten suffragan sees for Armagh and seven for Tuam, and for the southern half of Ireland twelve suffragan sees for Cashel and five for Dublin.[67] As some place names are corrupt, St J.D. Seymour thought these made up thirty-two dioceses in all[68] and A. Gwynn thirty-three.[69] The list, however, reflects a distribution of twice seventeen dioceses for the two halves of Ireland.

If one is tempted to see historical accuracy in Marcus' statement, one can only accept the possibility that these new bishoprics were created between the two synods. There is indeed the proof that the bishopric of Cloyne came officially into existence at the synod of Kells in 1152 and yet Nemias, bishop of Cloyne, is named not only by Marcus but also by St Bernard in his *Life of St Malachy*, written in 1149. On the other hand, the number seventeen is used in early Irish tradition in order to represent totality. In the *Voyage of Máel Dúin*, the queen of the Island of the Women has seventeen daughters and at night the seventeen companions of Máel Dúin slept with the seventeen girls and himself with the queen.[70] According to A. and B. Rees, seventeen may have been a significant territorial unit. They recall that, in the *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, Partholón and Nemed between them cleared sixteen plains, which together with the 'Old Plain of Elta', fashioned by God before any of the invaders arrived, make a total of seventeen.[71] Therefore one cannot altogether exclude the possibility that the thirty-four *civitates*, under the headship of Cashel and Armagh, may have had primarily a symbolical meaning.

66. J.C.D. Marshall, *op. cit.*, 16.
67. H.J. Lawlor, 'A fresh Authority for the synod of Kells', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 36 C (1921-24) 16-22.
68. St J.D. Seymour, *op. cit.*, 95-96.
69. A. Gwynn, *The Twelfth-Century Reform*, A History of Catholicism, vol. III (Dublin-Sydney: Gill and Son 1968) 56-57; B. Millet, 'Dioceses in Ireland up to the 15th century', *Seanchas Ard Mhacha*, 12 (1986) 1-44.
70. *The Voyage of Máel Dúin*, H.P.A. Oskamp (ed. and tr.), (Gröningen 1970) par. 28.
71. A. and B. Rees, *op. cit.*, 197, and *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, R.A.S. Macalister (ed. and tr.), vol. II, 270-271 par. 204; vol. III, 10-11 par. 214 and 122-123 par. 240. See also D.N. Dumville, 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', *Peritia*, 4 (1985) 21-66, for the importance of the number seventeen in another tradition.

The main reasons for accepting 1149 as the year in which Marcus wrote his story are that the events mentioned seem to have been very close to his life experience either affectively or in space or time and also that their accumulation indicates that they belong to a very recent past. The order in which Marcus presents the facts shows that he wrote his prologue in Germany. The first event is directly linked with Ratisbon and the departure of the Emperor for the Crusade; the second is related to the Pope and his departure from France; the third is linked with Clairvaux, Malachy and St Bernard; and the fourth (Nemias' death) brings us back to Ireland. There is logic in the listing of these four events. The list begins with the place in which Marcus writes and ends with the place from which he comes. This may represent, in reverse, the sequence of events that he learnt on his way to Ratisbon.

Although very little is known about Nemias, bishop of Cloyne, he may have had an important influence on Marcus who must have known him well and admired him considerably. Marcus tells us that Nemias died at 95 years of age in his own see, he praises his virtue, he informs us that he wants to write his life and that Tnugdal meets him in paradise. It would therefore seem that Marcus left Ireland after the death of Nemias, perhaps in December 1148 or early in January 1149.

Marcus then went to Clairvaux where he saw St Bernard engaged in the writing of the *Life of St Malachy*. St J.D. Seymour suggests that there are elements which could prove that there were contacts between Marcus and St Bernard.[72] He thinks, following H.J. Lawlor, that Marcus imitates St Bernard in using the word *metropolitanus* (meaning archbishop) and *civitas* (meaning diocese).[73] He adds also that the error about the movements of Pope Eugenius III after leaving Clairvaux must have been communicated by the Saint. Finally there is information in the Life about St Malachy and Nemias which can only have been transmitted by Marcus. Indeed St Bernard and Marcus are the only two people who specifically call Nemias bishop of Cloyne:

(XX1,47): Quite by chance he (*Malachy*) came to the city called

72. St J.D. Seymour, *op. cit.*, 90-91.
73. H.J. Lawlor, 'Notes on St Bernard's Life of St Malachy, and his two sermons on the passing of St Malachy', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 35 C (1918-20) 233-238, explains how St Bernard uses *metropolitanus* for the 'coarbs of St Patrick'.

Cloyne. While he was seated at the table a nobleman of that city came in and humbly entreated him on the behalf of his pregnant wife who had passed the usual time for giving birth so far that everyone was astonished. There was no one who did not believe that she was running a risk to her life. Nehemiah, the bishop of that city who sat next to him, also made the request as did others who were reclining together. Then (Malachy) said: 'I take pity on her for she is a good and modest woman.' Holding out to the man a cup which he had blessed, he said: 'Go, give her this to drink; know that once she takes the blessed drink she will give birth without delay or rush.' It was done as he commanded and that very night what he had promised came to pass.[74]

Therefore when Marcus uses the word *transcribit* with regard to the Life, the implication is that he actually saw the work in process of composition.

As soon as Marcus arrived at Ratisbon he must have been asked by the abbess Gisela to translate the oral story from Irish into Latin (*de barbarico in latinum transferret eloquium*). A. Wagner and V.H. Friedel have suggested that he had already started to write the account in Irish.[75] But there is no evidence of this. Marcus relies on his memory because, as H. Spilling notes, he uses *eloquium*, which points towards oral rather than written expression, and opposes *scribere* (to write) to *audire* (to hear) and *referre* (to relate)[76]

> *Scripsimus autem vobis fideliter, prout nobis ipse, qui viderat, eandem visionem retulit.* (However, we have written to you in good faith, especially since this vision has been related to us by the person who saw it.)[77]

74. R.T. Meyer (tr.), *op. cit.*, 62. There is also the miracle that St Malachy worked in Cashel:

> (XXIII,49): In the town of Cashel a man came to him with a son who was a paralytic and asked that he be cured. Saying a short prayer (Malachy) said: 'Go your way; your son will be cured.' He did go and he returned the following day with his son, but he was only partially cured. Then Malachy, getting up and standing over him, prayed for quite a long time and he was cured. Turning to the father he said: 'Offer him to God.' The man gave, but did not hold to, his promise and after some years that boy, now a young man, relapsed into the same condition. (*Ibid.*, 63-64).

75. A. Wagner, *op. cit.*, xxiii; V.H. Friedel and K. Meyer, *op. cit.*, viii.

76. H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 21-22.

In order to give information to convince readers of the reality of his tale, Marcus reveals some facts. Because they are cumulative and can be understood as autobiographical, they convey the impression that they belong to the memory of a recent past. Therefore one can accept that the *Vision of Tnugdal* was written in 1149 upon Marcus' arrival at Ratisbon.

To sum up, the given date 1149 and the four events mentioned must be considered together with the fact that Marcus uses the regnal system of counting and understands time according to the Celtic tradition of the precedence of darkness over light. The year, as far as Marcus was concerned, started at Samain. J.C.D. Marshall is not entirely wrong in thinking that the date given by Marcus is a 'literary device'. The events mentioned, when considered in accordance with the twofold Celtic interpretation of time (night and day, darkness and light, winter and summer), certainly fulfil a symbolic function. If the vision was seen in the dark of winter or in the womb of unconsciousness, it can only have been brought to light and conciousness in the appropriate time — that is, in the light of summer. So if conception happened between November and February followed by the request of the abbess as the indispensable feminine agent in the alchemy of creation, the actual birth of the story through its written composition might have occurred in the summer between May and August 1149. The pagan and the Christian worlds meet, as the worlds of symbols and reality meet, to unfold the mysteries of the otherworld and make the 'unseen' present through the sacred function of creativity.

THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

Marcus makes an effort to situate the vision of Tnugdal in historical time and geographical space. This fact serves the purpose of expressing the reality of the experience and also aims at defining the function of the Vision. The first striking aspect is not only that the vision happened in Munster but that most references pertain to this province. The knight who experiences the vision while in Cork is from Cashel. His name,

77. A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 4; and see below p. 110.

Tnugdalus, is a latinized form of the Irish *Tnúthgal* or *Tnúdgal*.[78] It was borne in the eighth century by one of the Eóganacht of Cashel.[79] The three kings Tnugdal meets in the otherworld are closely connected with the political strife of the province. Let us recall that *Conchober* is Conchobhar Ua Briain who from 1118 to 1142 was king of Thomond, the northern half of Munster. *Donachus* is Donnchadh Mac Carthaigh who for a while in 1127 was king of Desmond (the southern half of Munster) and from 1138 to 1142 tried to become king of Desmond after the death of his brother Cormac who was king of Desmond from 1124 to 1138 and is the king *Cormachus* of the Vision. The knight Tnugdal seems to have been familiar with the court of Cormac. Not only was Cormac his lord, says the Angel who leads Tnugdal's soul, but when Tnugdal sees the king's court in the *campus laetitiae* he is surprised not to recognize anybody among the people who serve him. Moreover, Tnugdal is welcomed into paradise by the only Munster saint mentioned in the Vision — Rúadán, his patron saint and the patron saint of the monastery of Lorrha situated in North Tipperary which had been 'one of the most important of the monastic churches of Munster'.[80] Apart from the fact that Rúadán was venerated in the *Schottenklöster*, he was supposed to be one of the Eóganacht of Cashel from whom the MacCarthys were descended.[81] Indeed the Eóganacht for centuries exercised power from their royal seat at Cashel over an area 'which in favourable circumstances might include large portions of Leinster and even Connacht'.[82] But from towards the end of the tenth century the O'Briens of Dál Cais (East Clare) reigned over Munster. Do these details signify a discreet recall of the extent of the ancient power of the

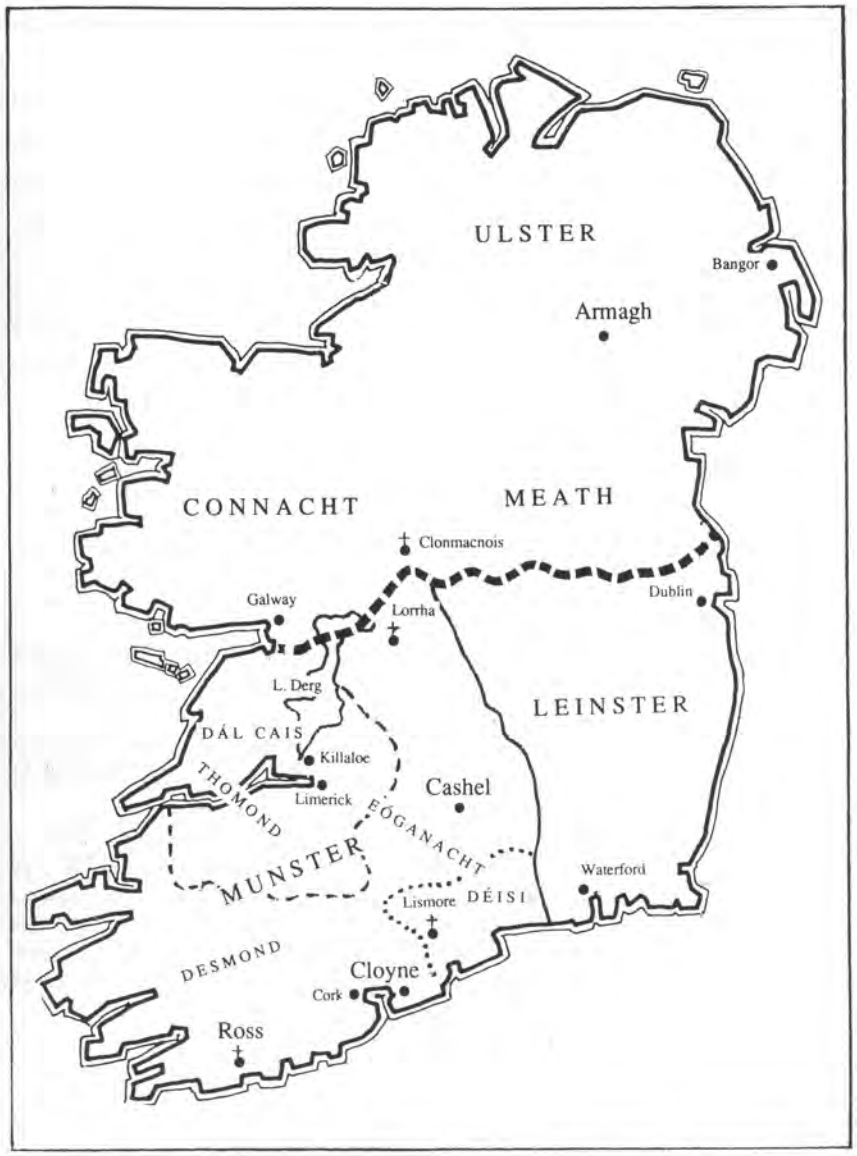
78. V.H. Friedel and K. Meyer, *op. cit.*, 91-92. According to K. Meyer, 'the metathesis of the two medial spirants is quite common in Irish, where *lub-gort* is made into *lugbort*, *bidba* into *bibda*, *dethbir* into *debthir* (BB. 316a 37), *cráibdech* into *cráidbech*.' He adds that the name is found in the *Annals of the Four Masters* A.D. 771 and several times in the *Book of Leinster* (pp. 323b, 324a 19 and 320d, 320e).

79. D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 1972) 176 (Genealogical table of the Eóganacht of Cashel).

80. J.F. Kenney, *The Sources of the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical* (New York: Columbia University Press 1929) 391.

81. *Life of Rúadán*, C. Plummer (ed. and tr.), *Lives of Irish Saints* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1968) vol. I, 317 par. I(1) and vol. II, 308 par. I(1); J.F. Kenney, *op. cit.*, 392.

82. M. Dolley, *Anglo-Norman Ireland (1100-1318)* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 1972) 3-4.



Map 2: based on K. Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the sources* (London 1972) map 1 , p. 111, and on R. Dudley Edwards, *An Atlas of Irish History* (London 1973) map 22, p. 82.

Eóganacht or that Tnugdal was an historical character very close to the family of the kings of Desmond or do they reveal the origins of Marcus?

At the beginning of the twelfth century Munster was in the power of the most distinguished descendant of Brian Bóruma, Muirchertach Ua Briain (1086-1119), who was a patron of the reform movement which was trying to bring religious practice in Ireland into line with that in Europe.[83] On the occasion of the synod of Cashel in 1101, which brought together the clergy and nobility of Munster and Leinster, he gave the Rock of Cashel to the Irish Church in perpetuity.[84] 'In one stroke, he deprived the Eóganacht of Cashel, his family enemies, of their ancient capital and generously provided the bishop of Cashel with the metropolis of his see.'[85] At the synod of Rathbreasail in 1111 Cashel became a metropolitan see, second only to Armagh. Marcus' provincialism appears in his choice of the superlative *precellentissima* to qualify Cashel:

> *Artimacha namque septentrionalium Hybernensium est metropolis, australium autem precellentissima est Caselensis. . .*
> (Armagh is the metropole of the northern Irish, but Cashel is the most eminent in the south . . .)[86]

Muirchertach was struck by illness in 1114 and, dispossessed of the kingship by his brother, Diarmaid,[87] was driven into retirement first in

83. A. Gwynn, *The Twelfth-Century Reform*, A History of Catholicism, vol. II, (Dublin-Sydney: Gill and Son 1968); J. Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 1972) Chap. I.

84. *Annals of the Four Masters*, J. Donovan (ed. and tr.), (Dublin 1848-1851) vol. II:
1101: A meeting of Leath-Mogha was held at Caiseal by Muircheartach Ua Briain, with the chiefs of the laity, and Ua Dunain, noble bishop and chief senior, with the chiefs of the clergy; and on this occasion Muircheartach Ua Briain made a grant such as no king had ever made before, namely, he granted Caiseal of the kings to the religious, without any claim of layman or clergyman upon it, but to the religious of Ireland in general.

85. D. Ó Corráin, *op. cit.*, 149; M. Dolley, *op. cit.*, 9.

86. A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 6; and see below p. 111.

87. *Mac Carthaigh's Book*, in *Miscellaneous Irish Annals*, S. Ó hInnse (ed. and tr.), (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies 1947):
1116: The year before this, Diarmaid Ó Briain turned against Muircheartach son of Toirdhealbhach Ó Briain, his own brother, and took the kingship of Munster from him, in violation of (the security of) the relics and sanctuaries of all Ireland, at Cashel and Lismore.

the monastery of Killaloe and later in the monastery of Lismore.[88] The five years of the succeeding dynastic struggle before his death in 1119 contributed on the one hand to the rising power of the king of Connacht, Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair, and on the other hand to the emergence of Desmond as an independent power under the kingship of Tadhg Mac Carthaigh. As a divided Munster suited the ambitious king of Connacht, he intervened in the dynastic struggle and by the treaty of Glanmire in 1118 Tadhg Mac Carthaigh was formally recognized as the first king of Desmond while Thomond was given to Muirchertach's two nephews Conchobar (the *Conchober* of the *Vision*) and Toirrdelbach Ua Briain.[89] In the years which followed, either because the two kings did not respect the treaty or showed too much independence,[90] Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair used every pretext to invade and ravage Munster. For instance one can find mentioned in the *Annals of Ulster* for the year 1121:

> par. 4: An army [was brought] by Tairdelbach ua Conchobuir and the province of Connacht into Desmumu and they plundered from Mag Feimin to Tráigh Lí, both laity and churches, i.e. seventy churches or a little more.
>
> par. 5: A plundering army (was brought) by Tairdelbach ua Conchobuir into Desmumu also and he plundered the termon of Lis Mór and brought away a countless spoil of cattle. . . .[91]

88. *Annals of Inisfallen*, S. Mac Airt (ed. and tr.), (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies 1951):
1114 par. 4: Diarmait Ua Briain took the kingship of Mumu, and banished Muirchertach from Luimnech to Cell Da Lua.
1116 par. 5: Muirchertach Ua Briain went to Les Mór and assumed the pilgrim's staff.

89. *Annals of Ulster*, S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill (eds and trs), (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies 1983):
1118 par. 6: An army (was brought) by Tairdelbach ua Conchobuir, king of Connacht, and Murchad ua Mael Sechlainn, king of Temair, along with him, and Aed ua Ruairc, into Mumu until they reached Glenn Maghair, and they gave Desmumu to Mac Carrthaigh and Tuadmumu to the sons of Diarmait, and took the hostages of both.
See also *Mac Carthaigh's Book*, 1118; H.A. Jefferies, 'Desmond: The Early Years, and the Career of Cormac Mac Carthy', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 88 (1983) 84-85.

90. H.A. Jefferies, *op. cit.*, 85-86.

91. See also the *Annals of Inisfallen*, 1121 pars 6-7 and the *Annals of the Four Masters*, 1121.

In 1123 Tadhg Mac Carthaigh fell ill and was deposed. His brother Cormac (the *Cormachus* of the *Vision*) became king of Desmond.[92] To assert his overlordship, Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair attacked Munster again in the spring of 1124. Six months later Cormac became involved with other kings in a conspiracy against the unwanted high-king but their armies failed at Athlone. Toirrdelbach executed the hostages of Desmond including Cormac's son.[93] By taking possession of the city of Limerick in 1125,[94] Cormac Mac Carthaigh simultaneously deprived the O'Briens of their capital and acquired the kingship of Munster.[95] Then, by getting involved in the succession to the kingship of Leinster, he challenged Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair to battle but was again disastrously beaten.[96] The outcome was so bad that the sub-kings of Desmond deposed Cormac, who entered the monastery of Lismore and took the tonsure. St Bernard in his *Life of St Malachy* reports:

> IV, 9: While the bishop was getting ready to receive the king with the honor due to him, he turned it down, remarking that he was willing to be considered as one of those poor brethren who were

92. *Annals of Inisfallen*:
    1123 par. 6: A grave malady afflicted Tadc, son of Mac Carthaigh, and Cormac, his brother, took the kingship of Desmumu in his presence.
    Mac Carthaigh's Book:
    1123 par. 2: Ó Mathghamhna, O Súilleabháin, Ó Caoimh, Ó Muircheartaigh and Ó Faoláin deposed Tadhg son of Muireadhach Mac Carthaigh; and Cormac son of Mac Carthaigh, his own brother, took the kingship from them in his presence.
93. H.A. Jefferies, *op. cit.*, 88. See the *Annals of the Four Masters*:
    1124: The great fleet of Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair on Loch Deirgdheirc, and he conveyed it over Eas-Danainne; and he plundered Uí-Conaill at Faing, and the fleet of Desmond was left to him.
    See also the *Annals of Inisfallen*:
    1124 par. 6: A hosting by Cormac and the Leth Moga to Ath Luain against Ruaidrí's son, and their hostages were put to death by the latter.
94. *Annals of Inisfallen*:
    1125 par. 8: Cormac, son of Mac Carthaigh, took the kingship of Luimnech in the above year.
95. H.A. Jefferies, *op. cit.*, note 36, refers to D. Ó Corráin, '*Caithreim Cheallacháin Chaisil*, History or Propaganda?', *Ériu*, 25 (1974) 13.
96. *Annals of the Four Masters*:
    1126: An army was led by Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair, and he gave the kingdom of Ath-cliath and Leinster to his own son, Conchobhar; he afterwards proceeded (to the South) and defeated Cormac Mac Carthaigh, and burned his camp at Sliabh-an-Caithligh.

> his companions. He preferred to lay aside his royal pomp and be content with common poverty, to look forward to God's will rather than recoup his kingdom by force. Nor did he wish to shed blood which would cry out to God from the earth against him. The bishop rejoiced at hearing this. Astonished at his devotion, he granted him his wish. What more should I say? To the king is given a poor little hut to live in and Malachy for a teacher, bread with salt and water for his food. The very presence of Malachy served as the king's sweetmeats.[97]

In the meantime the sub-kings gave the kingship to Cormac's brother, Donnchadh (the *Donachus* of the *Vision*).[98] On 1 February 1127 the king of Connacht hosted in Cork and submission was made to him. He redivided Munster between Donnchadh Mac Carthaigh and the brothers Conchobhar and Toirrdelbach Ua Briain.[99] But soon afterwards Conchobar and Toirrdelbach Ua Briain went to Lismore and begged Cormac to come back to lay life. To tempt him they gave him the kingship of Munster.[100] H.A. Jefferies thinks that this movement can

97. R.T. Meyer (tr.), *op. cit.*, 25.
98. *Mac Carthaigh's Book*:
    1126 par. 5: Cormac son of Mac Carthaigh was deposed by the nobles of Munster, and he went to Lismore on a pilgrimage, and took the tonsure there. He built a church at Cashel and twelve churches at Lismore. Donnchadh son of Muireadhach Mac Carthaigh took the kingship in his presence.
99. *Mac Carthaigh's Book*:
    1126 par. 6: A hosting by Toirdhealbhach son of Ruaidhrí, together with the nobles of Leath Cuinn, and Conchobhar and Toirdhealbhach, the two sons of Diarmaid Ó Briain, to Cork. Donnchadh son of Mac Carthaigh, Donnchadh son of Cú Mara son of Brodchú Ó Mathghamhna, Aonghus Ó Donnchadha, and Ó Caoimh, together with the other nobles of Desmond, went (against them), but they parted in peace, and they made submission side by side to Ruaidhrí's son.
    Annals of the Four Masters:
    1127: An army was led by Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair, by sea and land, until he reached Corcach-mor, in Munster; and he drove Cormac to Lis-mor, and divided Munster into three parts, and he carried off thirty hostages from Munster. See also H.A. Jefferies, *op. cit.*, 89; D. Ó Corráin, *op. cit.*, 152-154; M. Dolley, *op. cit.*, 23-25.
100. *Annals of Inisfallen*:
    1127 par. 4: Conchobar Ua Briain and Tairdelbach his brother, turned against Ruaidrí's son, and brought Cormac out of Les Mór, and gave him the kingship of Mumu. See also *Mac Carthaigh's Book*, 1127 par. 11.

be explained by the fact that the king of Connacht was making a claim on what is now Co. Clare and that the O'Briens 'sought to oust their unwelcome neighbour with Eóganacht assistance' and, in order to persuade Cormac, must have proposed that the kingship of Munster should alternate between the two families.[101] It also seems, according to St Bernard, that it was under the pressure of the clergy that Cormac decided to come back:

> IV,10: Finally he did acquiesce on the command of the bishop and by Malachy's persuasion, for it was in these two men he placed all trust, but he acquiesced only with difficulty.[102]

R. Mearns suggests that the proposal of the O'Briens had received support from the clergy because the leading monastery of the kingdom of Connacht was Clonmacnois, a monastery which was inimical to the reform movement, and that therefore the ecclesiastical authorities, in encouraging the military union of the two Munster kings, hoped for a successful rebuttal of the king of Connacht and a limitation of the power of Clonmacnois.[103] So Cormac resumed the kingship. His brother Donnchadh was deposed and banished to Connacht.[104] The king of Connacht reacted immediately. The *Annals of the Four Masters* declare for the year 1127:

> The great fleet of Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair, consisting of one hundred and ninety vessels, upon Loch Deirgdheirc; and he devastated the adjoining cantreds of Munster. The fight of two

101. H.A. Jefferies, *op. cit.*, 90.
102. R.T. Meyer (tr.), *op. cit.*, 26.
103. R. Mearns, *op. cit.*, 33.
104. *Annals of Inisfallen*:
> 1127 par. 6: Muirchertach Ua Muirchertaig, king of Loch Léin, two sons of Tadc son of Mac Carthaigh, namely Donnchad and Domnall, and Ua Caím were banished to Connachta.

Annals of the Four Masters:
> 1127: Donnchadh, the son of Mac Carthaigh, was afterwards expelled into Connaught, with two thousands along with him, by Cormac Mac Carthaigh, after returning from his pilgrimage; and the men of Munster turned against Toirdhealbhach.

> fleets at sea, namely, the Connaughtmen and the men of Munster; and the Connaught men gained the victory in that battle.

Donnchadh tried the following year to regain the kingship — without much help, it seems, from the king of Connacht. *Mac Carthaigh's Book* states:

> 1128 par. 2: A great fleet (was brought) by Donnchadh son of Mac Carthaigh, and by the son of An Fionnshúileach Ó Domhnaill, and by the son of An Fionnshúileach Ó Caoimh, and by Gearr na gCuinneóg Ó Bric to Ciarraighe Luachra. Ó Conchobhair commited treachery on them, and they came in pursuit from there into Ui Eachach, and he was not long in Munster again till he was banished to Connacht.

After 'the year of a half's peace' made by the archbishop of Armagh between Connacht and Munster in 1128,[105] Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair repeated his attack. In 1130 he raided Valentia and Great Island near Cork. He plundered West Limerick in 1131.[106] The two Munster kings responded independently. Cormac's brother, Donnchadh, plundered Connacht. In *Mac Carthaigh's Book* one can read for the year 1131:

> par. 4: A fleet (was brought) by Donnchadh son of Muireadhach Mac Carthaigh to Connacht, in spite of the peace between Toirdhealbhach son of Ruaidhrí and Cormac Mac Carthaigh . . . and he perpetrated plunders and burnings.

And Conchobhar Ua Briain responded by bringing his army to Leinster and Meath,[107] two kingdoms which the king of Connacht was trying to

105. *Annals of Ulster*:
> 1128 par. 9: A year of a half's peace or a little more was made by the successor of Patrick between the Connachta and the men of Mumu.

106. *Annals of the Four Masters*:
> 1130: He brought another fleet to Desmond, and plundered all Daibhri and Inis-mor.
> 1131: A plundering army was led by Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair and the people of the province of Connaught, into Munster; and they plundered Ui-Conaill-Gabhra.

107. *Annals of the Four Masters*:
> 1131: An army was led by Conchobhar Ua Briain and the men of Munster into

keep under his control, and defeated the cavalry of Connacht. Then the two Munster kings joined forces to invade Connacht. They failed in their first attempt and indeed Conchobar 'narrowly escaped assassination at the hands of one of the Clare sub-kings who was promptly executed'.[108] They repeated their attempt in 1132, destroyed the castle of Galway and burnt the town.[109] In 1133 they went further and plundered Connacht as far as Mayo but returned without hostages. The king of Connacht, facing a widespread revolt, was under attack from all sides. He negotiated peace with his enemies and a year's truce was agreed upon at Abhall Ceithearnaigh.[110]

> Leinster, and took its hostages. They afterward proceeded into Meath, and plundered the island of Loch-Semhdighdhe. Their cavalry engaged the cavalry of Connaught. The cavalry of Connaught were defeated. . . .

108. M. Dolley, *op. cit.*, 30. The *Annals of the Four Masters* note:

> 1131: Conchobhar Ua Briain was severely wounded by his own servant of trust, so that he was lying in his death sickness. Conchobhar Ua Longargain was the name of the person who wounded him and he was immediately killed in revenge for it.

109. *Mac Carthaigh's Book*:

> 1132: A hosting on land by Cormac Mac Carthaigh and the nobles of Leath Mogha into . . . and Uí Eachach and Corca Laoighdhe, and the fleet of Leath Mogha (came) by sea to meet them, and they demolished the castle of Bun Gaillmhe, and plundered and burnt the town.

110. *Annals of the Four Masters*:

> 1133: An army was led by Cormac Mac Carthaigh and Conchobhar Ua Briain into Connaught; and they killed Cathal, son of Cathal Ua Conchobhair, royal heir of Connaught. . . and they demolished Dun-Mughdhorn (Doon) and Dun-Mor, and plundered a great part of the country: they afterwards returned without hostages. . . . A conference was held by Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair and Conchobhar Ua Briain, with the chiefs of the clergy of Connaught and Munster, at Abhall-Chethearnaigh, and a year's peace was made between them.

Mac Carthaigh's Book:

> 1134 par. 5: Cormac son of Mac Carthaigh again assembled the Munstermen, Leinstermen, Comhaicne, the men of Midhe, the Galls of Dublin, Waterford, Wexford and Cork, and the Uí Eachach and Corca Laoighdhe on sea, in order to proceed into Connacht. Muireadhach Ó Dubhthaigh, archbishop of Connacht, came from Toirdhealbhach son of Ruaidhrí, King of Connacht, to make peace between Leath Cuinn and Leath Mogha. Cormac made peace with Toirdhealbhach in honour of the archbishop, and he himself went to Abhall Ceithearnaigh to confirm the peace with Toirdhealbhach.

For detailed studies of the rising power of Cormac Mac Carthaigh and the overthrow of Connacht's supremacy, see H.A. Jefferies, *op. cit.*, 90-93; D. Ó Corráin, *op. cit.*, 154-159; M. Dolley, *op. cit.*, 26-31.

Once the threatening power of Connacht had disappeared, the Munster alliance fell apart.[111] From 1135 to 1138 (the year in which Cormac Mac Carthaigh was murdered in his own house at the instigation of Toirrdelbach Ua Briain)[112] the two kings of Munster, Cormac Mac Carthaigh and Conchobhar Ua Briain, seized every occasion to make war on each other.[113] Upon the death of Cormac, his brother Donnchadh, to whom around 1135 he had given control of the Déisi (West Waterford),[114] assumed the leadership but does not seem to have been able to achieve anything. The *Annals of the Four Masters* state for the year 1140:

> The Clann-Carthaigh were expelled from Munster by the race of Briain.

Donnchadh tried again, upon the death of Conchobhar Ua Briain in 1142, to re-establish the kingship of Desmond[115] but failed in his attempt, withdrew to the Déisi, fell ill, was betrayed and handed over to Toirrdelbach Ua Briain.[116] According to the *Annals of the Four Masters*, he died in 1144 at Lough Gur having passed the two last years

111. *Mac Carthaigh's Book*:

> 1134 par. 6: A rupture of peace between Cormac son of Mac Carrthaigh and Conchobhar son of Diarmaid Ó Briain and his kinsman.

Annals of Loch Cé, W.M. Hennessy (ed. and tr.), (London: Longman 1871):

> 1135: A great number of the men of Des-Mumha fell by those of Tuadh-Mumha.

112. *Mac Carthaigh's Book*:

> 1138: Cormac son of Muireadhach Mac Carthaigh, king of the two provinces of Munster, and defender of all Leath Mogha, the most pious and valorous of men, the best for (bestowing) food and clothes, was, after building the church of Cormac at Cashel and twelve churches at Lismore, treacherously killed by Diarmaid Súgach son of Mathghamhain Ó Conchobhair Ciarraighe and Ó Tailcín, at the instigation of Toirdhealbhach son of Diarmaid Ó Briain, in his own house at Magh Tamhnach.

113. H.A. Jefferies, *op. cit.*, 94-96.

114. *Ibid.*, 95.

115. H.A. Jefferies, 'Desmond before the Norman Invasion: a political study', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 89 (1984) 14-15.

116. *Annals of the Four Masters*:

> 1142: Conchobhar, son of Diarmaid Ua Briain, supreme King of the two provinces of Munster, pillar of the valour and prowess of Leath-Mogha, died at Cill-Dalua, after the victory of penance; and the sovereignty of all Munster was assumed by Toirdhealbhach Ó Briain immediately after him. Donnchadh, grandson of Cathach, came into the Deisi-Mumhan, and killed some people; but some

of his life in fetters.[117] Cormac's son, Diarmaid, was banished to Leinster upon his father's death but established good relations with the king of Connacht and with his help fought Toirrdelbach Ua Briain. In 1151 he was given the kingship of Desmond. He died in 1185.

It seems that the mentioning of Conchobhar, Donnchadh and Cormac in the *Vision of Tnugdal* is also due to the fact that, in spite of their bitter rivalries, they were devout men who through their generosity helped the Church and did not hinder the reform movement. In the *campus laetitiae* Tnugdal's soul sees Conchober (Conchobhar Ua Briain) and Donachus (Donnchadh Mac Carthaigh) together and on friendly terms. He is amazed as these two men were very cruel and terrible foes. But the angel who guides Tnugdal's soul says that at their death they both expiated their enmity and that Conchobhar during his long sickness had promised that if he recovered he would become a monk. St J.D. Seymour[118] and H. Spilling[119] think that Conchobhar's sickness may refer to the assassination attempt which failed in 1131, as it is stated that in consequence of it he 'was lying in his death sickness'.[120] But as he recovered after all and did not become a monk, it must therefore refer to a period preceding his death. R. Mearns suggests that the king may have suffered from the same sickness contracted by his retinue as a result of having eaten green corn while on their way back from a foray against Dublin in 1141. The *Annals of the Four Masters* state that a number of them died.[121] According to the *Annals of Tigernach*:

> of his people fell, and Donnchadh himself was taken prisoner by the Déisi, who afterwards delivered him up to Toirdhealbhach Ua Briain.

Mac Carthaigh's Book:

> 1142 par. 2: Donnchadh son of Muireadhach Mac Carthaigh came to Droichead (Uí Bhriain) to defend the kingship, and Donnchadh son of Cinnéidigh (Ó Briain) was killed by him here. He went from thence westward across Luachair, and they (his followers) were turned again into Déise. He contracted an illness there, and the Uí Fhlannagáin betrayed him and handed him over to Toirrdealbhach son of Diarmaid Ó Briain.

117. *Mac Carthaigh's Book* gives 1143 as the year of his death.
118. St J.D. Seymour, 'Studies in the Vision of Tundal', *op. cit.*, 90.
119. H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 127.
120. See above note 108.
121. *Annals of the Four Masters*:

> 1141: An army was led by Conchobhar Ua Briain to Ath-cliath, and the

> Conchobhar, son of Diarmait Húa Briáin, king of Thomond and Desmond and Leth Moga, and an attacker of Erin, contracted an illness and died thereof at Killaloe in his pilgrimage.[122]

And the *Annals of the Four Masters* add that he died 'after a victory of penance'.

As to Donnchadh, who passed a good part of his life in exile or in captivity, the Angel who leads Tnugdal's soul says that Donachus had spent many years in fetters and that he had given all his possessions to the poor. Does Marcus mean *pauperes* in Ireland or, as D. Ó Riain-Raedel is inclined to think, the monks of the *Schottenkloster* of Ratisbon?[123] Indeed the *Annals* do not recall any specific example of his generosity but Conchobhar Ua Briain and a king Donatus were remembered as benefactors among the Irish congregation in Ratisbon.[124] However the *Vision of Tnugdal* shows a bias towards the MacCarthys not only because the generosity of Conchobhar is not mentioned but also because of the fact that Marcus calls Donnchadh king. Indeed he was king for a short while in 1127, but we saw that after the death of Cormac he did not manage to gain the kingship of Desmond. In his obituary in the *Chronicon Scotorum*, he is called 'chief royal heir of Mumhaim'.[125] The reality does not seem to matter for Marcus; only his loyalty to the MacCarthys counts. This bias is more striking with the mention of Cormac, to whom Marcus gives a chapter almost five times longer than that in which Conchobhar and Donnchadh are referred to.

It is the same charity towards pilgrims and the poor which gives to king Cormachus all his glory in the *campus laetitiae*. Indeed Cormac Mac Carthaigh was a great benefactor of the Church. *Mac Carthaigh's Book* for the year 1138 records that Cormac was 'the most pious and

> foreigners submitted to him as their king. Some of his people died on their return from the East, after having eaten the green corn at a certain place in Laeighis.

R. Mearns, *op. cit.*, 34.

122 *Annals of Tigernach*, W. Stokes (ed. and tr.), *Revue Celtique*, 18 (1897) 160.
123. D. Ó Riain-Raedel, 'Irish Kings and bishops in the *memoria* of the German *Schottenklöster*', *Ireland and Europe*, P. Ní Chatháin and M. Richter (eds), (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1984) 403.
124. See above p. 15 and appendix.
125. *Chronicon Scotorum*, W.M. Hennessy (ed. and tr.), (London 1866) at the year 1144.

valorous of men, the best for (bestowing) food and clothes' and that he built 'the church of Cormac at Cashel and twelve churches at Lismore'. In his obituary in the *Annals of the Four Masters* he is called:

> Bishop of the Kings of Ireland for bestowal of jewels and wealth upon the clergy and church, an improver of territories and churches.

He was indeed most generous towards the monastery of Lismore and contributed towards the building of a large number of ecclesiastical establishments, such as the monastery of Ibracense[126] about which St Bernard writes in his *Life of St Malachy* as follows:

> IX,18: And that site was located in his kingdom. The king was delighted to see Malachy and, grateful in remembering the kindness done to him, he put everything he had at the disposal of Malachy and his monks. Many animals were brought for the use of the brethren, as well as much gold and silver offered from royal generosity towards the expenses of building.[127]

He contributed towards the building of the monastery of St John, Apostle and Evangelist (Gill Abbey), in Cork, which was founded as a result of the peace treaty between Cormac and the king of Connacht in 1133.[128] Finally, on the Rock of Cashel, he built the Chapel which bears his name and which was consecrated in 1134 at the height of his glory. His generosity was most spectacularly rewarded in the *campus laetitiae*. Tnugdal sees him in a place apart from the two previous kings, in a beautiful palace decorated with gold, silver and precious stones. Magnificently dressed, Cormac is sitting on a throne of gold and is served by all the pilgrims and poor he has helped. It has been mentioned that the magnificence surrounding Cormac recalls that of Solomon.[129]

126. See A. Gwynn, *The Twelfth-Century Reform*, 43, for the question of the problematic identification of this site.
127. R.T. Meyer (tr.), *op. cit.*, 35-36.
128. T.J. Walsh and D. O'Sullivan, 'Saint Malachy, the Gill Abbey of Cork, and the Rule of Arrouaise', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 54 (1949) 41-60.
129. H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 126-127 notes 380 and 381 refers to 3 Kings VII,1-12; 3 Kings X, 18-21.

Through the references to these kings, Marcus seeks 'to promote amity between the great families of Munster'[130] and at the same time underlines that repentance and generosity can be powerful means of redemption.

Marcus, however, uses the great admiration he has for Cormac in a most dramatic fashion by showing Cormac's terrible punishment as if he wanted to strike the imagination. For three hours every day the king must plunge himself in a bath of flames up to the waist because he committed adultery and must wear a cilice on the top part of his body because 'he killed a vassal near (the altar of) St Patrick'. St J.D. Seymour thinks that the murder that he is expiating is the one referred by the *Annals of the Four Masters* for the year 1136:

> Donnchadh, son of Maelseachlain Ua Faelain, fell by Cormac Mac Carthaigh, by treachery.

A slightly different entry appears in *Mac Carthaigh's Book* at the year 1136:

> par.3: The son of the son of Tadhg Ó Briain and the son of Maol Sheachlainn Ó Bric, king of the Déise, were killed by Cormac son of Mac Carthaigh, and he himself took the kingship of Munster and Osraighe.

The St Patrick by which the king committed this act could refer to the high-altar of the Cathedral of Cashel.[131] It would seem that Cormac is punished for having killed someone inside a church, thereby violating

130. D. Ó Riain-Raedel, 'Diarmaid Mac Carthaigh, King of Cork (1185)', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 90 (1985) 25.
131. St J.D. Seymour, *op. cit.*, 89. Indeed it is stated in the *Libellus* that Christanus Mac Carthaigh was buried in front of the altar of St Patrick in Cashel:

> *Hoc itaque peracto abbas Cristanus mortuus est in Domino et sepultus in ecclesia Cassiliensi in archiepiscopatu. Cuius obsequiis interfuit rex et principes canonici quoque kathedralis ecclesie et laici maiores natu, et sepultus est coram eis ante altare sancti Patricii in metropoli.* (P.A. Breatnach (ed.), *op. cit.*, 257).

St J.D. Seymour adds: 'In the Celtic Church the consecration of a church did not include the placing of relics in the altar. That was the Roman custom. If the reformers in the twelfth century introduced that custom into Ireland, as is probable, they may have placed relics of St Patrick in the high altar of this church at the time when it was about to be definitely constituted as a cathedral for the Archbishop'.

the Church's right of sanctuary. The synod of Cashel of 1101, at which Muirechtach Ua Briain gave the former seat of the Eóganacht to the Church, was the occasion on which the reformers stated their aim of bringing Irish law into conformity with contemporary Roman canon law. Among the eight reforming decrees which they defined[132] is specified the Church's right of sanctuary to the exclusion of those guilty of simple murder, parricide or tribal murder.

Nothing is known with regard to the supposed adultery of Cormac. St J.D. Seymour states that Cormac, when he agreed to come out of the monastery of Lismore in 1127 at the request of Conchobhar and Toirrdelbach Ua Briain, married Conchobhar's niece in order to cement the alliance.[133] She must have been Toirrdelbach Ua Briain's daughter because the *Annals of Tigernach* declare:

> Cormac, son of Mac Carthaig, was treacherously killed by Toirdelbach Húa Bríain, his father-in-law, gossip and fosterer.[134]

But Cormac's chief wife was Dirbail ingen hUí Lorcain d'Ib Muireadaigh of Leinster, the mother of his son Diarmaid.[135] It seems that Marcus is trying to suggest the importance of the respect for Christian matrimonial practices. The punishment that Cormac Mac Carthaigh must endure for his sins places a stronger emphasis on his adultery than on his sin of murder. One can find the same difference in importance in the eight torments of superior hell that Tnugdal saw in his vision.

132. 1) The abuse of simony; 2) the Church's right to be free of rent or tribute of any kind; 3) the barring of laymen from ruling great Irish Churches; 4) the prohibition directed against two erenaghs in the same church; 5) the obligation of celibacy for bishops and priests; 6) the Church's right of sanctuary to the exclusion of those guilty of simple murder, parricide, or tribal murder; 7) the affirmation of the Church's freedom from the civil courts — a privilege extended to poets and clerks; 8) the forbidden degrees of kinship in marriage: A. Gwynn, *The Twelfth-Century Reform*, 13-16.

133. St J.D. Seymour, *op. cit.*, 90. He does not give his source.

134. W. Stokes (ed. and tr.), *Revue Celtique*, 18 (1897) 157. According to G. Keating, *History of Ireland*, II, 29 (P. Dinneen (ed.) London, 1908, vol. III, 311) the family relationship is inverted. He states: 'After that Cormac Mac Carrthach, king of Munster, was treacherously slain by Toirrdhealbhach Ó Briain, that is his own son-in-law and gossip'.

135. H.A. Jefferies, 'Desmond before the Norman Invasion: a political study', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 89 (1984) 30 note 58, quotes M.C. Dobbs, 'The Ban-Shenchus', *Revue Celtique*, 48 (1931) 192.

The first and therefore the least terrible, so to speak, is for the people who have committed murder, while sexual sins are punished in the sixth and seventh torments. A. Gwynn notes that the decrees of the synod of Cashel are silent on most aspects of Irish brehon law concerning marriage (the legal existence of a principal wife and of various classes of secondary wives and concubines was recognized and divorce accepted). As 'the chiefs of the laity and the clergy', at least of the southern half of the island, were present at this synod, he thinks that 'the reformers who had supported the King in his effort to correct abuses may have judged it wise to postpone a public affirmation of Christian law on this whole question for fear of provoking active opposition to the other reforms'.[136] They only specified the forbidden degrees of kinship in marriage. The punishment of king Cormac seems to be Marcus' contribution to the effort of the reformers to bring matrimonial law in Ireland into a more orthodox line. The nature of the punishment is also in conformity with Christian tradition. In all the redactions of the third century *Visio sancti Pauli*, immersion in fire to the navel is the punishment for lechery. For instance, one can read in *Redaction V*:

> *Alii vero qui mersi sunt usque ad umbilicum sunt illi qui fornicantur et adulterant, et postea non revertuntur ad penitenciam.* (Those who are immersed up to their navel are those who fornicate and commit adultery and do not do penance.)[137]

Redaction Br. is even more precise:

> *Alii demersi ad umbilicum qui fornicantur cum adulteris et cum alterius viri muliere et cum scorto.* (Those who are immersed to their navel are those who fornicate with adulterous women, with the wives of other men and with prostitutes.)[138]

The interesting fact is that Marcus may have had the opportunity of reading St Bernard's *Life of St Malachy*, since St Bernard — when describing one of the penances the king was accustomed to inflict upon

136. A. Gwynn, *op. cit.*, 16-19, quotation pp. 18-19.

137. T. Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli* (London: Christophers 1935) 198.

138. T. Silverstein, 'The Vision of Saint Paul: New Links and Patterns in the Western Tradition', *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*, 34 (1959) 235.

himself when he was in exile in the monastery of Lismore — wrote:

> IV, 9: In addition, every night he watered his bed with his tears and he also extinguished the evil burning lust of his flesh with a daily bath of cold water.[139]

It seems that the very same sins — adultery and murder — explain the mentioning, in superior hell (4th torment), of two heros of Irish epic, Fergus mac Róich and Conall Cernach. One of these is described as standing on his feet and the other on his head between the two jaws of the beast Acheron, keeping them open and dividing 'the mouth in the likeness of three gateways'. Critics wondered why these two — of all Irish heroes — were mentioned.[140] It appears that their choice can be justified in the context of the reform movement. Fergus mac Róich, the former king of Ulster in exile at the court of Connacht, was queen Medb's lover. He was slain at the instigation of king Ailill, her husband, who became jealous when he saw Fergus swimming in a lake with Medh on his breast, her legs entwined around him.[141] On the other hand Conall Cernach, the famous Ulster champion, at the instigation of the jealous Medb and as revenge for Fergus, slew Ailill who was consorting with a woman behind a hazel-bush on the morning of May Day. Conall was himself subsequently slain.[142] Did Marcus derive some personal and political satisfaction from seeing two great Ulster warriors in superior hell and from alluding indirectly to the fate of the betrayed and slain king of Connacht?

Marcus undoubtedly supported the reformers. In paradise Tnugdal meets four bishops — Celestinus, Malachy, Christianus and Nemias — in the company of St Patrick. The first two were leaders of the reform

139. R.T. Meyer (tr.), *op. cit.*, 25. However the penance of standing in cold water was practised by Irish ascetics. See Louis Gougaud, 'La mortification pas les bains froids', *Bulletin d'Ancienne Littérature et d'Archéologie Chrétiennes*, (1914) 96-108.

140. St J.D. Seymour, *Irish Visions of the Other-World* (London 1930) 163 writes: 'Why Marcus has singled out these two for such ignominious treatment is not clear, but there may possibly be here an allusion to some ancient tale which has not come down to our day'.

141. K. Meyer (tr.), *The Death Tales of the Ulster Heroes* (Dublin: Hodges Figgis 1906) 32.

142. K. Meyer (ed. and tr.), 'The Cherishing of Conall Cernach and the Deaths of Ailill and Conall Cernach', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 1 (104) 102-111.

party. Celsus is Cellach who died in 1129 as archbishop of Armagh and who was buried at Lismore. He and Maol Muire Ua Dunáin, who had presided at the synod of Cashel in 1101, were the first leaders of the Irish reform party.[143] In the next generation, the leadership of the movement was assumed by St Malachy. The brother of St Malachy, Christianus, who died as bishop of Clogher and Louth in 1138, was also an active supporter and Nemias, bishop of Cloyne, is found in their company perhaps because of the role he played in the reform movement. Both are praised in the *Vision of Tnugdal* for their chastity, an attitude that the reformers wanted to see put into practice by the clergy. The terrible punishment of monks and religious who fornicate (7th torment) also serves this purpose.

143. A. Gwynn, *The Twelfth-Century Reform*, 25-26.

Internal analysis and literary tradition

THE STRUCTURE OF THE VISION

The *Vision of Tnugdal* is divided by Marcus into twenty-seven parts. It begins with a prologue in which the author mentions contemporary events. Then follows an introduction in which he describes Ireland and relates the circumstances of Tnugdal's vision. After this comes Tnugdal's tale (chap. 1) of what happened when his soul left his body and met his guardian Angel (chap. 2). There are then twenty-two chapters in which Tnugdal describes the progress of his soul in the abode of the departed. A concluding chapter, which includes the epilogue, tells of the return of Tnugdal's soul to his body.

A thoughtful design of textual space is perceived if one studies the composition of the text not in accordance with its division into chapters but in accordance with the proportional length given to the introductory part, the visit to the World of Darkness, the visit to the World of Light and the conclusion. The following quantitative balance, based on the number of lines in each chapter of Wagner's edition,[1] is revealed: approximately half of the text is devoted to the description of the torments of superior and inferior hell; two thirds of the other half are given to the description of the World of Light and to the conclusion and the remaining third is taken up with the prologue, introduction and the two first chapters. Therefore the proportional balance of one (introductory part), three (the torments of superior and inferior hell) and two (the description of the World of Light and the conclusion) reflects a careful plan in which the emphasis on the torments of hell does not unbalance the structure of the whole.

The twenty-four chapters covering the visit of Tnugdal's soul to the otherworld give an insight into Marcus' understanding of eschatology. While Boswell thought that there was an 'absence of a definite scheme

1 This is merely a convenient unit of measurement.

of the Otherworld',[2] C. Carozzi is of the opinion that Marcus aimed at expressing all the divisions known to him of the otherworld.[3] The eight torments of superior hell combined with inferior hell remind one of the nine torments of hell mentioned by Honorius Augustodunensis in his *Elucidarium* (III, 13).[4] The division of paradise into three different places separated respectively by walls of silver, gold and precious stones recalls the three heavens of St Paul (II *Cor.*, XII,2-4). The sevenfold division of the otherworld — superior hell, inferior hell, the place of the not quite bad (the *mali non valde*), the place of the not quite good (the *boni non valde*) and the three different places separated by precious walls — corresponds to the sevenfold division of the otherworld in the *Vision of Adomnán*.[5] J. Le Goff finds also in this vision a tendency of the twelfth century to give to the beyond a fivefold division (superior hell and inferior hell, the place of *mali non valde*, the place of the *boni non valde* and paradise with its three enclosures). He thinks, however, that the lack of unity of Marcus' otherworld is due to Marcus' confused conception of space and time.[6]

The complexity of Marcus' otherworld is the main reason for the failure of some critics to recognize its unity. The structural aspect of the *Vision of Tnugdal* can be summarized in the following manner:

2 C.S. Boswell, *An Irish Precursor of Dante. A study on the Vision of Heaven and Hell ascribed to the eighth-century Irish Saint Adamnán, with translation of the Irish Text* (London: David Nutt 1908) 225.

3 C. Carozzi, 'Structure et Fonction de la Vision de Tnugdal', *Faire Croire: Modalités de la diffusion et de la réception des messages religieux du XIIe siècle au XIVe siècle*, A. Vauchez (ed.), (Rome 1981) 225.

4 Y. Lefèvre, *L'Elucidarium et les Lucidaires* (Paris: E. de Boccard 1954).

5 St J.D. Seymour, 'Studies in the Vision of Tnugdal', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 37 C (1926) 97-99; see also 'The seven Heavens in Irish Literature', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, XIV (1923) 18-30.

6 J. Le Goff, *La Naissance du Purgatoire* (Paris: Gallimard 1981) 258-259. See also H. Spilling, *Die Visio Tnugdali*, 99-105.

PROLOGUE
INTRODUCTION
ARRIVAL IN THE OTHER WORLD

THE WORLD OF DARKNESS

I. SUPERIOR HELL

1. Torment of the murderers: the dark pit covered by a lid
2. Torment of the traitors: the mountain-path with fire and cold
3. Torment of the proud: the narrow bridge over a dark abyss
4. Torment of the misers: the beast Acheron
5. Torment of the robbers: the bridge with spikes over a lake
6. Torment of the greedy and the lecherous: Phristinus' house
7. Torment of the ecclesiastics who fornicate and of people who behave with sexual immoderation: the beast on the frozen lake

Descending Movement

8. Torment of those who accumulate sin upon sin: the forges of Vulcan

. . . . . .

Descending Movement

II. INFERIOR HELL

9. Descent into hell
10. Inferior hell: torment of the square pit
11. Torment of the prince of darkness

THE WORLD OF LIGHT

III. OUTSIDE A WALL WITH A DOOR

1. The torment of the 'mali non valde': rain, wind, hunger and thirst

IV. CAMPUS LAETITIAE. WITHIN THE WALL

The 'boni non valde':

2. a) The not quite good: those who do not deserve hell
3. b) Those who repent before death: kings Donachus and Conchober
4. c) Those who have still to expiate some sins: king Cormac

Ascending Movement

V. A WALL OF SILVER WITH NO DOOR

5. The glory of faithfully married people

. . . . . .

Ascending Movement

VI. A WALL OF GOLD WITH NO DOOR

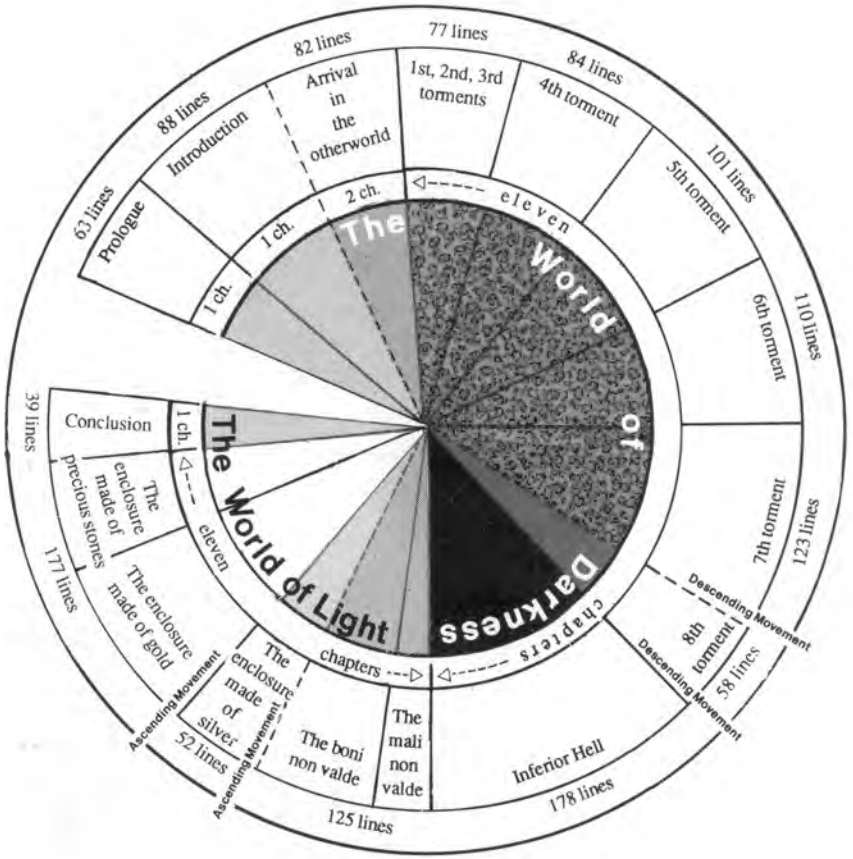
6. The glory of the martyrs and the continent
7. The glory of monks and nuns: presence of the Holy Trinity
8. The glory of people who built and protected churches: the verdant Tree

Horizontal Progression and Ascent of the wall

VII. A WALL OF PRECIOUS STONES WITH NO DOOR

9. The glory of the virgins and the nine orders of angels
10. Saint Rúadán
11. Saint Patrick and four bishops

CONCLUSION



Graphic representation showing the proportional relationship of the different parts of the *Vision of Tnugdal*, based on the number of lines in each chapters of Wagner's edition (see note 1).

The equal division into eleven chapters each of Tnugdal's visit to the World of Darkness (named hell) and to the World of Light (never named paradise) leads to a dual vision of the otherworld. Hell with its darkness, foul smells, devils and tortures appears as a world some- how unorganized. Nature is present in its wildest and most horrific forms: high mountains, deep valleys, dangerous waters, beasts, dragons and giants. Human creation, the two bridges, the house of Phristinus — which is a gigantic oven — and the forges of Vulcan are frightening. The World of Light, set in a landscape of pleasant meadows, is on the contrary an organized place, one divided by walls into compartments.

There are different stages in each of these two worlds. In hell there is a progression from the terrible torment of the murderers (1st torment) — who are roasted on the lid covering a dark pit and who, on becoming liquid, fall into the glowing coals and are renewed to undergo further torments — to the worst state of eternal damnation in the deepest hell where the mere vision of the torments is more fearful than all the torments previously experienced. Progression is marked on several occasions. Before the torment of the misers (4th torment) the Angel says:

> *Eamus, donec ad alia his incomparabilia perveniamus.* ('Let us go until we reach other sufferings which are beyond comparison with these.')[7]

Indeed, in the course of the torment of the misers (4th torment) inside the beast Acheron, the sinners suffer attack from all kinds of animals (dogs, bears, lions, snakes and other unknown ferocious beasts), scourging by the devils, cold and heat, horrible smells and frightening darkness. This is a complete hell in itself. Tnugdal's soul had experienced only aspects of it before. Later on, in the house of Phristinus (6th torment), the Angel says that this is one of the most terrible torments although there are still even worse to come. Then the path going from the torment of the beast on the frozen lake (7th torment) to the torment of the forges of Vulcan (8th torment) is described as being more frightening than before:

7 A. Wagner (ed.), *Visio Tnugdali*, 15; and see below p. 119.

> *Pergebant quidem per loca terribilia et multum precedentibus diriora.* (They went on through terrifying and more dreadful places than the previous ones.)[8]

The Angel says to Tnugdal's soul in order to give him some confort after having suffered the torment of Vulcan's forges:

> *Confortare, quia dominus est deducens ad inferos et reducens. Tu ergo esto fortis, quia licet sint mala, que huc usque passa es, majora sunt ea, a quibus liberaberis, si tamen voluntas fuerit nostri redemptoris.* ('Be strengthened, for the Lord went down to Hell and returned. Therefore, be yourself strong because, although the torments you have suffered up to now were bad, there are greater ones which you will be spared if indeed it be the will of our Redeemer.')[9]

Therefore, in spite of the descriptions of equally awful torments, Marcus manages to create an idea of a worsening state as Tnugdal's soul goes onwards.

In the World of Light the reader is brought from a place where there is no bad smell but where there is light suffering (rain, wind, hunger and thirst) to the *campus laetitiae* (where there is intermittent suffering or the absence of pain) and progressively to the vision of the highest place in paradise. Progression is also underlined by the passage to five different types of places which are well delineated by walls and by means of entry. Outside the wall of the *campus laetitiae* are found those who are not quite bad (the *mali non valde*). Within the wall, in the *campus laetitiae*, are found those who are not quite good (the *boni non valde*). These two places are linked by a door. And then there are the three other places enclosed by walls of different richness (silver, gold and precious stones) in which there are no doors. The enclosure made by the wall of silver is a kind of terrestrial paradise in which physical happiness is found. The married people — for whom, if they have respected their marriage vows and have been generous, this is the proper place — must nevertheless wait for the call of God at the Last Judgment:

8 *Ibid.*, 30; and below p. 132.

9 *Ibid.*, 32; and below p. 134.

Conjugalium, illorum videdicet et illarum, qui maritalem thorum illiciti adulterii macula non coinquinaverunt et legitimi conjugii fidem servaverunt, set et familias suas bene regebant et bona sua temporalia pauperibus et peregrinis et Christi ecclesiis tribuebant, quibus judex justus in extremo judicio est dicturus: Venite, benedicti patris mei, possidete regnum vobis paratum ab origine mundi. (For the faithful spouses, that is to say, the men and women who did not defile the conjugal bed with the stain of unlawful adultery and who observed the promise of lawful wedlock; they ran their household well and distributed their worldly goods to the poor, the pilgrims and the churches of Christ. To them, God will say at the Last Judgment: 'Come, O blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you since the beginning of the world'.)[10].

This is a place set apart, since Tnugdal's soul does not know how he and the Angel entered into it:

Et anime quidem nulla in eo apparebat porta, nesciens tamen, quomodo eam divina introduxit potentia, intravit . . . (Although the soul could not see any door in it, without knowing by which divine power he entered, he found himself inside. . .)[11]

Similarly Tnugdal's soul does not know how they penetrated into the next enclosure, that made by the wall of gold, in which monks and nuns contemplate the Holy Trinity and defenders and builders of churches stand beneath the Tree, the symbol of the Church. On the contrary, Tnugdal's soul and the Angel ascend the wall of the last enclosure in which virgins, the nine orders of angels, and saints are met. And from this height Tnugdal contemplates the glory of everyone below, the punishments endured by the sinners and the orb of the Earth.

The dual vision of the otherworld appears also in the two different directions the souls take after death. In the long speech given after Tnugdal's soul comes out of the house of Phristinus (6th torment), the Angel points out that the just who must not endure any suffering after

10 *Ibid.*, 46; and below p. 146-147.

11 *Ibid.*, 45; and below p. 146.

death are brought to see the torments in order to increase their love for God:

Si hoc te movet, cur justi, qui penas non patiuntur, ad videndas illas ducuntur, ideo fit, ut visis tormentis, a quibus liberantur per divinam gratiam, ardentius in laudem sui creatoris ferveant et amorem. ('If you are worried by the question as to why the just, who do not suffer the punishments, are brought to see them, this is done so that, having seen the torments which they are spared by divine Grace, they will burn more fervently with love and praise for their Creator.')[12]

He recalls that Tnugdal, while crossing the bridge over the dark abyss (3rd torment), met a pilgrim-priest (*presbyter peregrinus*) carrying a palm and walking without being terrified of the place. He says that sinners, on the contrary, are first led to contemplate the glory of the saints in order to have their pain increased:

Sic e contrario anime peccatorum, que digne eternis suppliciis judicantur, prius ad sanctorum gloriam perducuntur, ut visis premiis, que sponte deseruerant, cum ad penas venerint, magis doleant et ipsam gloriam, quam ante potuissent acquirere, in memoriam revocent ad augmentationem pene. ('And conversely, the souls of the sinners who have been judged worthy of eternal torments are brought to the glory of the saints so that, having seen the rewards which they have forfeited of their own free will, they suffer more when they arrive at the torments and so that their punishment increases as they recall the very glory they could previously have acquired.')[13]

Therefore those irremediably condemned are brought to the highest place of paradise before being cast into eternal damnation while the others are brought through hell and either suffer or pass unscathed on their way to paradise. This reminds one of Honorius Augustodunensis' *Elucidarium* III,19:

12 *Ibid.*, 26; and below p. 128.

13 *Ibid.*, 26-27; and below p. 128.

Justi videbunt malos in poena, ut magis gaudeant quod hanc evaserunt; mali etiam ante judicium videbunt bonos in gloria, ut magis doleant quod hanc neglexerunt. (The just will see the damned in torments in order to rejoice better for having escaped them; the damned will see, before the judgment, the just in their glory in order to suffer more for having overlooked it.)

The dual interpretation of the otherworld encompasses a fourfold or a sixfold division. Indeed the World of Darkness and the World of Light are divided into two parts by the mention of a descending or an ascending movement. The passage from the seventh torment to the eighth torment is marked by a descending movement:

Erat quippe via valde angusta et quasi de cacumine altissimi montis in precipitium semper descendens, et quanto plus descendebat, tanto minus anima reditum ad vitam sperabat. (The path was very narrow and was continuously going down as if from the top of the highest mountain to an abyss, and the more he went down the more the soul despaired of being brought back to life.)[14]

This stresses the horrifying quality of the coming torment by comparison with the previous one. Then an inferior hell is announced when the Angel says that the people in superior hell are awaiting to be judged while those in inferior hell are already judged:

Omnes, quos vidisti superius, judicium dei expectant, set isti, qui adhuc sunt in inferioribus, jam judicati sunt. ('All the people you have seen before are expecting the judgment of God, but from here on those who are in the lower parts have already been judged.')[15]

The descending movement is also announced by the title (*De descensu ad inferos*) and by further references to the action of going down into the deepest hell, a place characterized by a greater darkness, an intolerable stench and an awful anguish.

Similarly in the World of Light two places are differentiated by the mention of an ascending movement. After having witnessed the state

14 *Ibid.*, 30; and below p. 132.

15 *Ibid.*, 32; and below p. 134.

of the *boni non valde*, the Angel says to Tnugdal's soul: '*Ascendamus*' ('Let us go up'). Equally, after having met the faithfully married people inside the enclosure made by the wall of silver, the Angel declares:

Oportet nos adhuc ascendere et illa, que superius sunt, videre. ('We must ascend further to see what is above.')[16]

On the contrary, the enclosure formed by the wall of precious stones appears to be situated at the same level as that of the previous enclosure since the Angel says: '*Proficiscamur*' ('Let us move forward').[17] But when they reach the wall, they must ascend to go over it:

Ascendentes ergo murum videre procul dubio, quod oculus non vidit nec auris audivit nec in cor hominis ascendit, que preparavit deus diligentibus se. (As they climbed the wall, they saw without a doubt that the eye has not seen nor ear heard nor has it entered into the heart of man what things God has prepared for those who love Him.)[18]

These ascending movements leave aside the place of the *mali non valde* and the *campus laetitiae*, which are connected by a door in the wall which separates them. Therefore, parallel to a superior and an inferior hell, one can see in the World of Light a lower and an upper part. From the structural point of view, however, the eighth torment, that which follows the mention of descending, does not belong to inferior hell but is the worst torment of superior hell. Similarly the faithfully married people, although found after the mention of ascension and within an enclosure which can be entered only by passing over the wall, do not yet enjoy the presence of God but must wait till the Last Judgement. Topographically speaking, this place is as much removed from the *campus laetitiae* as it is from the enclosure made of gold. But Marcus seems to follow the opinion of Honorius Augustodunensis who, among the just, makes a distinction between the perfect — that is the martyrs, the religious and the virgins (*Elucidarium* III,4) — and the imperfect — that is the married people:

16 *Ibid.*, 46; and below p. 147.

17 *Ibid.*, 51; and below p. 151.

18 *Ibid.*, 52; and below p. 152.

Est quidam ordo justorum qui imperfecti dicuntur, qui tamen omnes in libro Dei scribentur, ut sunt conjugati, qui mortui pro meritis in amoenissima habitacula recipientur . . . omnes post judiciu angelis consocientur. (There is one order of the just who are said to be imperfect although they are all inscribed in God's book. These are the married people who on their death have been received into the beautiful mansions on account of their merits. . . All will be associated with the angels after the Judgment.) *Elucidarium*, III, 5.[19]

There is a similar distinction in the *Vision of St Paul* (Recension L1). In the second heaven 'dwell those who on earth were married but remained continent. Rewards seven times greater than theirs are in store for the virgins. . .'.[20] The eighth torment and the place of the married people, however, have the same characteristics of belonging to one side while having the marks of the other because they occupy an intermediate position. Their similarity is also emphasized by the fact that they have almost the same textual length (58 lines for the eighth torment and 52 lines for the place of the married people).

The careful plan of the text has already been noted but it is worth pointing out that the four different parts of the otherworld are amazingly well balanced. The textual space allocated to inferior hell (178 lines), to the lower part of the World of Light (177 lines) and to the superior part of the World of Light (178 lines) is practically of the same length, while the textual space allocated to superior hell (553 lines, approximately 184 x 3) has three times the length of the space given to any of the three other groups. If 177/178 lines are taken as equivalent to *a*, one finds the following proportions with regard to textual space:

Superior hell	3a
Inferior hell	a
Inferior paradise	a
Superior paradise	a

19 Y. Lefèvre, *L'Elucidarium et les Lucidaires*, 444, the translation is J-M. Picard's. See also Lefèvre's note 3 (pp. 165-166) in which he states that the source used by Honorius would be Haimon of Halberstadt's *De varietate librorum* (I,9) (J.P. Migne, *P.L.*, 118, 883).

20 T. Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, 26 par. 2(2).

Usually, following the conception of St Augustine (*Enchiridion* XXIX,110), this fourfold division is based on the different states in which the souls are in relation to good and evil. In the *Tidings of Doomsday* (pars 15-19), for example, there are the *mali non valde* who 'shall be brought to judgement and shall go after to their doom', the *mali valde* who will go to hell, the *boni non valde* who 'will be brought to judgement, and they will go after unto reward' and the *boni valde* who will go to paradise.[21] In the *Vision of Tnugdal*, the *mali non valde* and the *boni non valde* are both found in the lower part of Marcus' World of Light and other categories of souls are not specifically mentioned. Nevertheless, if one studies the composition of the *Vision of Tnugdal* in accordance with the implicit categories of souls in the different parts of the otherworld, one is led to discover a sixfold structure:[22]

1. (The very bad) in inferior hell.
2. (The bad) in superior hell.
3. The *mali non valde* outside the wall of the *campus laetitiae.*
4. The *boni non valde* in the *campus laetitiae.*
5. (The good) within the wall of silver.
6. (The very good) within the wall of gold or within the wall of precious stones.

21 W. Stokes (ed. and tr.), *Revue Celtique*, IV (1879-1880) 245-257.

22 St J.D. Seymour, in 'The Eschatology of the Early Church', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, XIV (1923) 192, notices that Marcus 'goes much further than his literary predecessors' in his 'sixfold division of the Other World'. Seymour stresses also the distinction, in the Irish Church, between the fourfold division made *only at the Day of Judgment* (which appears in the *Tidings of Doomsday* and in the *Fifteen Tokens of Doomsday*) and the fourfold division made *immediately after death* (which appears in the *Vision of Adomnán* and the *Vision of Tnugdal*). In *Irish Visions of the Other-World* (London, 1930, 154), he thinks that this fourfold division after death combined by Marcus with the seven heavens brought Irish eschatological views 'more in accordance with those held by Western Christendom, which had come to Ireland as part of the movement towards Reform'. But the fourfold division in the *Vision of Tnugdal* is not based on the different states of the souls in relation to good and evil.

It is perhaps possible to see in this sixfold structure the influence of the *Vision of Alberic*. See M. Inguanez (ed.), *Visio Alberici*, *Miscellanea Cassinese*, 11 (1932) 81-103. In this vision there are seven heavens which are not really described except for the last two. In the sixth heaven dwell angels, archangels and saints. The throne of God is found in the seventh. Marcus would seem to have raised angels, archangels and saints to the seventh heaven. The sixth heaven is nevertheless, as in the *Vision of Alberic*, the Celestial Paradise.

This brings one back to a dual structure of another kind, a structure based not on darkness *versus* light but on bad *versus* good. It introduces one also to a further division of the otherworld which appears in the three kinds of punishment for the bad and the three kinds of bliss for the good.

One can further find a threefold structure of the otherworld arising from the three different states in which the souls are in relation to God. Between the state of those already judged and sent to inferior hell and the state of those who in the two upper enclosures of the World of Light are already in the presence of God, there lies an intermediate state where souls are waiting for the decision of God with regard to their final abode. There are:

a) those who await for the judgment of God in superior hell;

b) those who await for God's decision to end their pains (that is the *mali non valde* and the *boni non valde* who — like king Cormac — must still expiate some sins);

c) those who await God's call at the Last Judgment (the *boni non valde* who — like kings Donachus and Conchober — repent before their death) and also the faithfully married people.

THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY JUDGED
Inferior hell
THOSE WHO AWAIT FOR THE DECISION OF GOD
Those in superior hell
The *mali non valde*
The *boni non valde*
The faithfully married in the enclosure made of silver
THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY CALLED
Those who are in the enclosure made of gold
Those who are in the enclosure made of precious stones

Marcus' intermediate state is an entity in itself. It possesses an infernal, an intermediate and a paradisiac aspect. In superior hell one must endure the necessary suffering for one's sins but not more that one's due. In the middle of the second bridge of spikes over the dreadful lake where the robbers are punished (5th torment), Tnugdal's soul — pushing the cow he meant to steal from his friend (*compater*) — meets another soul carrying sheaves of corn. They cannot pass each other and

one of the two must retrace his steps. But each finds himself miraculously transported to the other side of the bridge. This suffering of crossing half of the bridge is sufficient in this instance for each of them to expiate his sin. In the case of Tnugdal, as he did not in reality commit the sin of stealing the cow, the crossing of half the bridge was enough to expiate his intention to steal the animal. Fergus mac Róich and Conall Cernach are in an uncomfortable position keeping open the jaws of the beast Acheron, one standing on his head and the other on his feet, but they do not endure further terrible suffering because, one may assume, they were not Christians and therefore not guilty to the same extent as those who knew the Christian law. Indeed the Angel says to Tnugdal's soul:

> . . . *et suis temporibus in secta ipsorum tam fideles* . . . ('. . . in their time they were so faithful to the beliefs of their own people . . .')[23]

There is perhaps a reminiscence of Honorius Augustodunensis' *Elucidarium* III, 16 in which the position of the damned is described:

> *Capita sunt eis deorsum mersa, dorsa ad invicem versa, pedes sursum erecti et undique in poenis distenti.* (They are placed back to back with their heads sunk in the ground and their feet raised in the air and every part of their body suffers excruciating tortures.)[24]

Through the words of the Angel, however, one feels Marcus' affectionate attitude towards the ancient Celtic lore.

All sins are not expiated in superior hell. In a place at the same time hellish and paradisiac are found the *mali non valde*. These are souls who led an honest life but who lacked generosity towards the poor. They suffer constantly from the rain and the wind and the pains of hunger and thirst.[25] But they are in a world of light where there is an

23 A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 17; and see below p. 121.

24 J-M. Picard's translation.

25 H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 124, considers this punishment extremely mild when compared to *Math*, 25,41- 44:

> Then he will say to those at his left hand: 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave

absence of foul smells. Only a wall separates them from the *campus laetitiae* which is full of fragrant flowers. Here are found the not quite good (*boni non valde*) about whom the Angel states:

> *Hic habitant boni non valde qui de inferni cruciatibus erepti nondum merentur sanctorum consortio conjungi.* ('The people who dwell here are not totally good: they have been spared the tortures of Hell but do not yet merit being united to the communion of saints.')[26]

Among them some are not quite free from sin. King Cormac, because he did not respect matrimonial rules and killed a vassal in a church, expiates his sins in a bath of flame and wears a cilice on the top part of his body for three hours each day. But, because of his generosity towards pilgrims and the poor, he knows the greatest glory for the remainder of each day in a palace made of gold, silver and precious stones. This palace, which has neither doors nor windows, has the features of a complete paradise.

There are also two levels in the paradisiac part of Marcus' intermediate state. In the *campus laetitiae* are found the *boni non valde* who have expiated their sins on earth and who, like kings Donachus and Conchober, have repented before dying. While they are quite happy, their state cannot be compared with that of the faithfully married people within the enclosure made by the wall of silver. These two places may represent what was understood in earlier eschatology as the *sinus Abrahae* or the *refrigerium interim.*[27]

The common feature of all these different places is their temporary nature against the background of eternity. It seems that Marcus tries to fit into his eschatological view the dual possibilities of Judgment in the otherworld — a judgment immediately after death (which sends the very bad and the very good down to inferior hell or up to the two superior parts of heaven) and a judgment or the call of God at

me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me'.

26 A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 41; and below p. 142.

27 See J. Le Goff, *La Naissance du Purgatoire*, 70-74.

Doomsday (until which souls are suffering or waiting happily according to what they deserve). This temporary place is also conceived in a static world. It is not, therefore, a place of purification that can be modified by the prayers of the living but is, at worst, a place of expiation and, at best, a place of waiting. It seems that Marcus' main aim is to impress upon his reader the nature of the justice of God towards Christian and non-Christian, the latter being represented by Fergus and Conall.

Justice is a theme which appears throughout the Vision.[28] When the demons hear that Tnugdal's soul is escaping from them because Tnugdal is not in fact really dead, they abuse God for His injustice:

> *O quam injustus et crudelis est deus, quia quos vult mortificat et quos vult vivificat, non, sicut promisit, unicuique secundum opus suum et meritum reddit: liberat animas non liberandas et dampnat non dampnandas.* ('O what a cruel and unjust God He is, since He brings death to whomever He wants and restores life to whomever He wants but does not reward each according to his works and merits as He promised: He frees souls who should not be freed and damns others who should not be damned'.)[29]

Further on, when freed from the torment of the beast Acheron, Tnugdal's soul praises God. And the Angel adds:

> *Sicut tu in primis dixeras, sic esse scias, major est divina misericordia, quam iniquitas tua. Ipse quidem reddet unicuique secundum opus suum et meritum, set tamen unumquemque de suo fine judicabit.* ('As you said at first and as you know for a fact, divine mercy is greater than your iniquity. He does indeed repay everyone according to his deeds and merits, but He will also be everyone's judge as regards his ultimate fate.')[30]

After having suffered torments in Phristinus' house (6th torment), Tnugdal's soul is utterly depressed. He cannot help wondering where God's *misericordia* is. The Angel answers:

28 See also H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 159-166.

29 A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 12; and below p. 116.

30 *Ibid.*, 18-19; and below p. 122.

Heu, inquit, o filia, quam multos decepit ista sententia minus intelligentes. Deus enim, licet sit misericors, est tamen justus. Iustitia reddit unicuique secundum sua merita, misericordia plurima ultionibus digna condonat delicta. ('Alas, my child, a great many people have been misled by this sentence, which they did not properly understand. Although God is merciful, He is nevertheless just. Justice repays everyone according to his own merits; mercy allows forgiveness of many offences which deserve punishment.')[31]

Further on the Angel adds:

Igitur deus cuncta bene disponens, sicut justitiam temperavit misericordia, et misericordiam temperavit justitia, ut neutra illarum sit sine altera. Nam si in corpore peccatoribus penitentiam non agentibus misericorder parcitur, hic tamen pro suis meritis dictante justitia digna patiuntur. ('That is why God, who arranges everything rightly, tempers justice with mercy, just as he tempers mercy with justice, so that neither can exist without the other. Although sinners who do not repent are mercifully spared while in the flesh, they nevertheless suffer here according to their merits, following the fitting sentence of justice.')[32]

The Angel also underlines the fact that nobody, not even the new-born child, is free from sin. Many, however, will not suffer pain:

Nemo enim liber est a peccato nec infans unius noctis, multi vero liberantur a pena, ut etiam non tangat eos umbra mortis. ('No one is exempt from sin, not even a one night old infant, but many will be exempted from punishment so that the shadow of death will not even touch them.')[33]

This intermediate state reflects in its complexity the long questioning of the destiny of those who are not irremediably condemned for their deeds, those who are neither very bad nor very good and those who are

31 *Ibid.*, 25; and below p. 127.

32 *Ibid.*, 26; and below p. 128.

33 *Ibid.*; and below p. 128. See H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 163 note 504.

imperfect. An attempt is made to combine a judgment after death with a judgment at the end of the World. This place of waiting is not yet named Purgatory. Its importance, however, appears in the amount of textual space that it occupies. Indeed it takes up four times the space given to either inferior hell or the two superior parts of the World of Light. Therefore the *Vision of Tnugdal* appears as a synthesis and the culmination of a long tradition.

Marcus' otherworld is a creation which coincides perfectly with his conception of the universe. It is a real place, the structure of which reflects the same intricacy as the structure of this world, that is to say — as far as Marcus was concerned — Ireland or Munster. Indeed Marcus reproduces in his otherworld the same multiplicity, complexity and totality that he perceives around him. One must remember that Ireland was and still is divided into four provinces — Connacht, Ulster, Leinster and Munster — and that the word for province (*coiced*) means a fifth. According to one tradition this fifth province was Meath (*Mide*), 'The Middle', while according to another it came from a division of Munster into East and West Munster.[34] These four great provinces and the centre constituted the ordered cosmos. Ireland was also divided into two parts, the northern half (*Leath Cuinn*, 'The Half of Conn') and the southern half (*Leath Mogha*, 'The Half of Mug'), which on a symbolical plane express distinct and complementary aspects, as is evident when one recalls that *conn* means 'head' or 'chief' and that *mug* means 'servant'.[35] Similarly the province of Munster, where the vision occurred, is a world in itself and stands apart from the other provinces.[36] A. and B. Rees write: 'Munster has a measure of autonomy and it has a hierarchy of its own which reproduces that of the superior realm. Like Ireland itself, it is divided, not only in two, but into five — North, South, East, West and Middle.'[37] On the other hand, in *Lebor na cert* (The Book of Rights) — written in accordance with

34 A. and B. Rees, *Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales*, 118.

35 *Ibid.*, 101-102.

36 *Ibid.*, 133-139.

37 *Ibid.*, 133. See also, for instance, J.H. Lloyd (ed. and tr.), 'The Five Munsters', *Ériu*, 2 (1905) 49-54.

Ua Briain policy — Ireland is divided into seven kingdoms headed by Munster.[38]

Similarly the division of Marcus' text into twenty-seven parts is perhaps not unintentional but rather a way for Marcus to convey totality. Apart from the fact that twenty-seven is the number of days of the sidereal period of the moon, this number, under the form of three multiplied by nine, seems to have had a considerable significance in Ireland.[39] Indeed, in the *Voyage of Bran*, Bran sets out with three companies of nine. When they arrive at the house in the Land of the Women they find three times nine couches for every couple.[40] Marcus can therefore be seen as the leader who guides the reader through his twenty-seven parts like Bran who led his three companies of nine. At the end of the Vision, curiously enough, the Angel says that Malachy founded fifty-four congregations of monks, canons and nuns. This number has been understood as a statement,[41] although it has been recognized that it is 'difficult to make firm judgements about Malachy's individual contribution.'[42] As fifty-four is composed of twice twenty-seven or three times the sum of seventeen plus one (i.e. the number of dioceses plus the metropolitan see in one half of Ireland),[43] this may be the way in which Marcus expresses Malachy's extraordinary achievement in introducing into many places in Ireland the Cistercian Rule and the Rule of the Augustinian Canons. In the *Lebor Gabála Érenn* it is

38 F.J. Byrne, 'The trembling sod: Ireland in 1169', in *A New History of Ireland*, A. Cosgrove (ed.), (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1987) 14; *Lebor na Cert: The Book of Rights*, M. Dillon (ed. and tr.), Irish Texts Society 46 (London 1962); see also F.J. Byrne's review in *Studia Hibernica*, 5 (1965) 156.

39 A. and B. Rees, *op. cit.*, 192-195.

40 S. Mac Mathúna, *Immram Brain* (Tübingen: Niemeyer 1985) par. 32 and par. 62.

41 Looking at the list of monasteries of Augustinian Canons founded between 1140 and 1148, one counts forty-one monasteries. (See A. Gwynn and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses. Ireland*, 153-156.) An entry by the abbot of Arrouaise in 1180 states that Malachy introduced the rule into almost all the cathedral churches of Ireland. P. Gosse gives a list of twenty-six cathedral churches following the rule of Arrouaise. (See P. Gosse, *Histoire de l'abbaye et de l'ancienne congrégation des chanoines d'Arrouaise* (Lille 1786) 311, quoted by P.J. Dunning, 'The Arroasian Order in Medieval Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies*, IV (1945) 313.) Without counting Mellifont and her five daughter houses, the number fifty-four would be easily met.

42 J. Watt, *op. cit.*, 21.

43 See above p. 25-26.

stated that the Gaedil, when they took Spain by force, fought fifty-four battles.[44]

Through the symbolic use of numbers, Marcus tries to give a cosmic dimension to his creation. As the mythical structure of Ireland or Munster shows and as Marcus' geography of the otherworld tends to represent, cosmic unity is in any case the external surface of a complex internal composition.

MARCUS AND TRADITION

The *Vision of Tnugdal* is, according to Marcus, the written version of Tnugdal's orally transmitted vision. To what extent can one believe Marcus? Must one recognize in it the *topos* of the vision told at second hand — such as Cicero's *Scipio's Dream*, Plutarch's *Vision of Thespesius*, Gregory the Great's *Vision of Stephen the Soldier* (*Dialogues* IV,37), Bede's *Vision of Drycthelm* (*Hist.*, V,12), Boniface's *Vision of the monk of Wenlock* and Heito's *Vision of Wetti*?[45] Or had someone really had a vision upon which Marcus embroidered? Whatever the reality may be, the *Vision of Tnugdal* belongs to a literary tradition and its author is not unfamiliar with rhetorical skills. This appears as much in Marcus' use of conventional literary *topoi* as in the many features of his otherworld which can be recognized in previous descriptions of the beyond.

44 R.A.S. Macalister (ed. and tr.), vol. II, 26-27. Seventeen plus one multiplied by four (that is seventy-two) was the number of languages from which the Gaelic language was fashioned by Gaedal Glas. (*Ibid.*, 13).

45 Cicero, *De Re Publica, De Legibus*, C.W. Keyes (ed. and tr.), the Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann 1928): *Somnium Scipionis*, 260-283; Plutarch, *Moralia*, P.H. Lacy and B. Einarson (eds and trs), The Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann 1959), vol. VII, 'On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance', pars 22-33: The Vision of Thespesius; Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, O.J. Zimmermann (tr.), (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press 1959); Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*, L. Sherley-Price (tr.), revised by R.E. Latham, (Harmondsworth 1977); Boniface's *Vision of the monk of Wenlock* in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae*, vol. III, Bonifatii espist. 10, 252-257 (this vision was written before 717); Heito, *Vision of Wetti*, E. Dümmler (ed.), in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini*, vol. 2, 267-275 (this vision was written in 824).

46 G. Simon, 'Untersuchungen zur Topik der Widmungsbriefe mittelalterlicher Geschichtsschreiber bis zum Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts', *Archiv für Diplomatik*, 4 (1958) 52-119, 5/6 (1959-60) 73-153; T. Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell 1964).

Indeed, the skeleton of Marcus' prologue is similar to the pattern of prefaces handed down from writers of the classical period to writers of the middle ages. The central *topos* was the request to write the book. Other *topoi* — such as, for example, the emphasis on the author's modesty — were linked to this in different ways.[47] Accordingly, two-thirds of Marcus' prologue is occupied by the dedication to the abbess G., the praise, the request, the reason for his willingness to comply and his apologies for his inadequacies.

As required by convention, the author had to show himself as torn between his desire to comply with the request of the dedicatee and his unwillingness to write.[48] Marcus, however, does not declare any unwillingness to comply with the request. On the contrary he stresses the reasons why he cannot refuse. His first reason for acceptance is the most extreme reverence he feels towards the superior intentions of the abbess:

> . . . *caritavitam et valde devotam bone intentionis vestre petitiunculam vobis negare nequaquam possumus* . . . (. . . we cannot in any way deny your modest request, full of charity, good intent and great devotion . . .)[49]

The second is charity. To make his point, Marcus quotes 'a learned man' (*quidam eruditus*): '*vires, quas imperitia denegat, caritas ministrat*' ('Charity provides the strength that is denied by ignorance'). This brings to mind the comment made by Gregory the Great in his *Dialogues* (III,37) in connection with the nature of the holiness of Sanctulus:

> We know for certain that Sanctulus was not well versed in literary studies, nor did he know the precepts of the Law. But because 'love of neighbor . . . fulfills all the demands of the law' (22 Rom. 13,10), he kept the law in its entirety by his love of God and neighbor. Knowledge that he did not receive through formal study became a living force within through love.[50]

47 T. Janson, *op. cit.*, 116-117.

48 *Ibid.*, 120-121.

49 A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 3; and below p. 109.

50 O.J. Zimmerman (tr.), *St Gregory the Great. Dialogues* (Washington D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press 1977) 184.

Marcus then expresses confidence in the prayers of the abbess:

> . . . *et in vestris sanctis orationibus confidentes, ipsam verecundiam postponimus et nostram insipientiam vobis ostendere non erubescimus.* (. . . and trusting in your holy prayers, we shall set aside our modesty and shall not feel ashamed of showing you our foolishness.)[51]

The final reason that Marcus gives for writing the book is the traditional theme of obedience.[52] Without saying so he relies on the Holy Scriptures and adapts the following text for his own purposes : 'To obey is better than sacrifices' (1 Samuel 15,22).

Another conventional expression of humility is, of course, admission of one's shortcomings followed by a request to the dedicatee to make improvements if necessary.[53] Therefore Marcus on three occasions alludes to his foolishness. He also mentions (a usual *cliché*)[54] his incompetence and inadequacy of style:

> *Placuit namque vestre prudentie, quatinus mysterium, quod ostensum fuerat Tnugdalo cuidam Hybernigeno. noster stilus licet ineruditus de barbarico in latinum transferret eloquium vestreque diligentie mitteremus transscribendum. . . . Ego autem inops et pene latine eloquentie ignarus, vobis tamen devotissimus, ipsam materiam, prout mei ingenioli parvitas replicare potuit, offerre me non piguit* . . . (For your wisdom has so wished that our pen, although uneducated, should translate the mystery which was shown to Tnugdal, an Irishman, from the vernacular into the Latin language, and that we should send it to you for copying under your vigilance. . . . However, while most devoted to you, I am incompetent and almost ignorant of Latin eloquence, but I am not unhappy to offer this story, for God loves a happy giver (2 *Cor.* 9,12), supposing that my small and meagre talent were able to recount it. . . .)[55]

51 A. Wagner, *op. cit.*, 3-4; and below p. 109.

52 T. Janson, *op. cit.*, 120-123.

53 *Ibid.*, 141-143.

54 *Ibid.*, 124-132.

55 A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 4; and below p. 109.

And he goes on to request the abbess to correct his style:

> . . .*rogans tamen, ut, si qua ibi fuerit minus compendiose interpolita sententia, emendare et competenter cudere vestra erudita non erubescat sollertia.* (But I ask that wherever a phrase of less conciseness has slipped through, your shrewd erudition should not feel shy about amending it and coining a proper one.)[56]

In the same spirit of humility the author likes to present himself as dependent on the authority of another. In Marcus' case, the authority behind which he retires is that of the abbess who requested the book and may correct his style, that of Tnugdal who told him the vision, and that of God:

> *Noster enim stilus, set Christi est opus.* (The style is ours indeed, but the work is of Christ.)[57]

This is a powerful trinity for whom our monk is a mere spokesman.

Even Marcus' attitude toward his work is not original. According to convention he couples his stylistic shortcomings with reliability of fact:[58]

> . . . *et nolite bonam certamque materiam contempnere, licet ei dictamen videritis minime convenire.* (. . . do not despise a good and true story even if you see that its literary style is not entirely proper.)[59]

Similarly, he mentions the well-known rhetorical rule of brevity.[60] First he links brevity with usefulness (another *cliché*).[61] Then he refers again to brevity, this time at the more conventional place, that is at the end of the prologue:

> *Set quia non est nostri propositi modo tragedias texere, ad commissum nobis opusculum deo adjuvante properemus.* (But since it is not our intention to keep on writing grandiloquent sentences, we shall hasten, with the help of God, to start the little work which has been entrusted to us.)[62]

56 *Ibid.*, 4; and below p. 109-110.

57 *Ibid.*; and below p. 110.

58 T. Janson, *op. cit.*, 133-134.

59 A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 4; and below p. 110.

60 T. Janson, *op. cit.*, 154-155.

61 *Ibid.*, 99.

Finally, Marcus' announcement of a future work, that is his declaration to write about Nemias' life and miracles, is another way to comply with the *topoi* of prefaces.[63]

Further reliance by Marcus upon tradition is seen from features which are found in various descriptions of the otherworld.[64] Tnugdal, like Stephen in the story told by Gregory the Great, is a soldier; and the theme of apparent death for three days is also encountered in the *Vision of Thespesius*. Like many other visionaries, Tnugdal is conducted on his journey by a guide who is his guardian Angel.[65] As occurs in the *Vision of Thespesius*, the *Vision of Drycthelm* and the *Vision of Alberic* (par. XV), the guide who protects the visionary leaves him for some time in the torments.

Stench, darkness, intolerable heat and insufferable cold are the

62 A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 5; and below p. 110.

63 T. Janson, *op. cit.*, 75.

64 E.J. Becker, *A Contribution to the Comparative Study of the Medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell, with special reference to the Middle-English Versions* (Baltimore: John Murphy Company 1899); A.B. van Os, *Religious Visions. The development of the eschatological elements in mediaeval English religious literature* (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris 1932); F. Bar, *Les Routes de l'Autre Monde. Descente aux Enfers et Voyages dans l'Au-delà* (Paris: P.U.F. 1946); P. Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 23 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann 1981); St J.D. Seymour, 'Studies in The Vision of Tnugdal', *op. cit.*, 106; *Irish Visions of the Other-World* (London: S.P.C.K. 1930) 124-167; H. Spilling, *Die Visio Tnugdali*, 47-142.

65 See, for instance, the *Vision of Adomnán*. According to C.S. Boswell, (*op. cit.*, 182 note 1), 'there is a great variety in the persons invested with this office. The earliest of these is the Archangel Michael in the *Book of Enoch*, and he retains his functions in a large proportion of the subsequent visions . . .' He adds: 'In the later medieval visions the guardian angel appears in this capacity with increasing frequency, and in particular in the Irish legends from the time of St Patrick, who received his revelation through the mouth of his angel Victor'. There is perhaps at the origin a confusion between the angel guardian who associates daily with the soul and the psychopomp under the guidance of whom the soul — during an interval of three days (*Apocalypse of Elias*, G. Steindorf (ed.), Leipzig, 1899, p. 150) or seven days (*Fourth Book of Ezra*, R.L. Bensly, Cambridge, 1895, p. 100) between death and the ascension to the Throne of Judgment — makes a tour of the universe, visiting earth, hell and paradise. See T. Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, 105 note 23.

characteristics of hell.[66] There is the oven or furnace as in the *Vision of St Paul*. The pit of fire reminds one of the volcanoes which in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* (IV,31) are used as entrances to hell. But, as in the *Vision of Drycthelm*, the pit is full of human souls being thrown up by the flames and falling back again.

The test-bridge, which becomes narrower for the sinners who are obliged to fall into a river full of horrible monsters awaiting to devour them, has an oriental origin. It passed from Persian theogony to the Koran and entered the Christian world by the *Vision of St Paul*.[67] It is found in the *Vision of Sunniulf* (Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks* IV,33), in Gregory the Great's *Vision of Stephen the Soldier* (*Dialogues* IV,37) and in the *Vision of Barontus*.[68] It is also found in Boniface's *Vision of the monk of Wenlock*, in the *Vision of Adomnán* (par. 22), in the *Vision of Alberic* (par. XVII) and in the *Adventure of St Columba's Clerics* (par. 35).[69]

The beast Acheron (4th torment), which swallows souls who are tortured in its belly, reminds one of the monster Hydra devouring sinners with her fifty venomous throats (*Aeneid* VI, 573-577) and of the wide-throated monster which sits at the entrance of the Egyptian infernal world. D.D.R. Owen thinks that the beast Acheron 'is a synthesis of the Leviathan and Behemoth of Job XL and XLI, with the strange feature of the giants standing like pillars between its jaws probably suggested by the beast of Daniel VII, 5'.[70] In Rev. 20,2 the devil appears also as a dragon. In the *Vision of St Paul* there is in hell a many-headed dragon called Parthemon.[71] In most Redactions it has its mouth forever open. Gregory the Great also told stories concerning a certain Theodore and a monk of the monastery of Ton Galathon who, on the verge of death, saw themselves being devoured by a dragon (*Dialogues* IV,40). Likewise in the *Vision of Alberic*, there is near hell

66 See J. Vendryes, 'L'Enfer glacé', *Revue Celtique*, 46 (1929) 134-142, for the old Breton and Nordic conception of a freezing hell.

67 E.J. Becker, *op. cit.*, 17-19; A.B. van Os, *op. cit.*, 21.

68 *The Vision of Barontus*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum merovingiarum*, vol. 5, 368-394. This vision was written about 678.

69 W. Stokes (ed. and tr.), 'The Adventure of St Columba's Clerics', *Revue Celtique*, 26 (1905) 130-170.

70 D.D.R. Owen, *The Vision of Hell* (Edinburg: Scottish Academic Press 1970) 35.

71 T. Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, 66-69.

a huge dragon swallowing souls. In the *Life of Maedoc of Ferns*, there is the vision of king Brandub who saw himself near hell surrounded by many monsters ready to swallow him.[72]

The beast which devours souls and later gives birth to them in a frozen lake (7th torment) is not unlike the great dragon of Buddhistic hell which swallows souls who, after a time of punishment, are sent back again to the world through its tail. Similarly St Columba's clerics, in their voyage to the otherworld, saw in hell fiery dragons swallowing souls and evacuating them.[73]

The house of Phristinus (6th torment), in which souls are tormented with knives, axes, hooks and all kinds of sharp instruments, reminds D.D.R. Owen of torments found in ancient Egyptian mythology when the sun passes through the underworld. Swords, knives and spitting out of fire is used by female spirits to put the enemies of the God Ra to death.[74] In the *Vision of Tnugdal*, Phristinus' house is compared to an oven:

> *Domus autem ipsa, quam viderant erat maxima, ut arduus mons pre nimia magnitudine, rotunda vero erat quasi furnus, ubi panes coqui solent positione.* (The house they saw was big, like a steep mountain so huge was it, and it was round in shape, like an oven for baking bread.)[75]

The name Phristinus may have been inspired by *pistrinum* a word linked to *pistor*, which, as explained by Isidore's *Etymologiae* XV,vi,4, meant a baker:

> *Pistrinum, quasi pilistrinum, quia pilo antea tundebant granum. Unde et apud veteres non molitores sed pistores dicti, quasi pinsores, a pinsendis granis frumenti; molae enim usus nondum erat, sed granum pilo pinsebant. Unde et Vergilius* (*Georg.*, I,267): '*Nunc torrete igni fruges, nunc frangite saxo.*' (*Pistrinum* (=

72 *Life of Maedoc of Ferns* II, par. XXXV(95), in C. Plummer, *Lives of Irish Saints*, vol. I, 216 and vol. II, 209-210.

73 W. Stokes (ed. and tr.), 'The Adventure of St Columba's Clerics', *op. cit.*, par. 33 and note 2 p. 153.

74 D.D.R. Owen, *op. cit.*, 34-35.

75 A. Wagner, *op. cit.*, 23; and below p. 126.

mill/bakery) for *pilistrinum* because in the old days they used to crush grain with a mortar (*pilum*). That is why the Ancients used to call the miller/baker, not *molitores*, but *pistores* for *pinsores*, from the action of crushing (*pinsere*) the grains of wheat, for they did not yet use millstones but crushed grain with mortar. Hence Virgil, *Georg.*, I,276: 'Now roast the grain with fire, now crush it with a stone'.)[76]

R. Mearns notes that in fact the torments resemble more what would happen in a butchery than in a bakery, and that the punishment of being treated as foodstuff seems proper for the sin of gluttony.[77] Together with gluttony, the sin of lechery is also punished. This combination seems to come from Isidore who thought that lust is nourished by excess in eating and drinking.[78]

Vulcan's forges (8th torment) seem to be of classical origin (*Aeneid* VIII,416-453). In the *Vision of Thespesius*, Thespesius saw the torture of souls being welded and hammered into other shapes. In the *Voyage of St Brendan*, there is an evil island of smiths.[79] This particular torment belongs also to Honorius Augustodunensis' description of hell (*Elucidarium* III,14-15). But in Isaiah (LIV,16) the devil is already presented as a smith.

Lucifer, the prince of darkness, is seen crouched over a griddle. His body is as black as a crow, he has a long and thick beak and a prickly tail. His thousand hands each bear twenty fingers with iron nails longer

76 J-M. Picard's translation. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, W.M. Lindsay (ed.), (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1911).

77 R. Mearns, *op. cit.*, 25. There is no evidence in the text for St J.D. Seymour's idea ('Studies in the Vision of Tundal', *op. cit.*, 104) that this house is an allusion to the traditional house of hospitality in ancient Ireland.

78 See P.J. Mullins, *The spiritual life according to Saint Isidore of Seville* (Washington: The Catholic University Press of America 1940) 88. See Isidore's *Sententiae*, (J.P. Migne, *P.L.*, 83, 647-649):

> II, xlii, 2: *Prima est luxuriae materies saturitas panis.*
> II, xlii, 4: *Proxina est ventri libido, sicut loco, ita vitio. Ubi enim ventris cura, ibi et eorum quae circa ventrem sunt proxima. In ordine namque membrorum genitalia ventri junguntur. Dumque unum ex his immoderate reficitur, aliud ad luxuriam excitatur.*
> II, xlii, 11: *Nemo potest dominari caeteris vitiis, nisi prius ingluviem ventris restrinxerit.*

79 J.J. O'Meara (tr.), *The Voyage of St Brendan* (Dublin: Dolmen Press 1978) chap. 23.

than soldiers' spears. In eighth-century Moslem eschatology there is a description of a multi-fingered devil. It is stated : 'God has created an angel with as many fingers as there are sinners condemned to fire and each sinner is tortured by a finger' (*Tadhkira* 73,16).[80] In the apocryphal *Apocalypse of Esdras*, Antichrist is described as bound in chains and with hands having fingers as sharp as scythes.[81] Gregory the Great, in *Moralia in Job*, associated Behemoth's tail with Antichrist.[82] This conception of Lucifer runs through Irish literature. In the *Voyage of the Uí Chorra*, Lochan in his dream of hell sees the monster 'with abundance of heads and feet upon it'.[83] This description is more elaborate in the tenth-century *Fifteen Tokens of Doomsday*, in which the great monster is described as having 'five hundred heads, and five hundred fangs in each head, and a hundred feet, and a hundred toes on every foot, and a hundred nails on every toe'.[84]

In the eleventh-century *Tidings of Doomsday* there is the following passage:

> A place wherein beside every evil shall be the Monster, conspicuous, awful, manyheaded, with crowds of red glowing coals. Somewhat of his description, to wit: a hundred necks upon him and a hundred heads on each neck, and five hundred teeth in each head, a hundred hands upon him, and a hundred palms on each hand, and a hundred nails on every palm.[85]

Although of the opinion that Marcus was influenced by the *Tidings of Doomsday*, St J.D. Seymour thinks that Marcus has missed the ethical point because there is no reason given in the *Vision of Tnugdal* for the punishment of Lucifer, while it is stated in the *Tidings of Doomsday* that the Devil is punished in exact proportion to the amount of sin he

80 M. Asin Palacios, *La Escatología Musulmana en La Divina Comedia*, 3rd ed., (Madrid 1961) 188.

81 T. Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, 117 note 11; C. Tischendorf, *Apocalypses Apocryphae* (Leipzig 1866) 28-29.

82 T. Silverstein, *op. cit.*, 68; and *Moralia in Job*, XXXII, xv, 26: J.P. Migne, *P.L.*, LXXVI, 651-652.

83 W. Stokes (ed. and tr.), *Revue Celtique*, 14 (1893) par. 14.

84 W. Stokes (ed. and tr.), *Revue Celtique*, 28 (1907) par. 36.

85 W. Stokes (ed. and tr.), *Revue Celtique*, 4 (1879-1880) par. 20.

has caused men to commit.[86] In the Greek version of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* one reads:

> Then the King of glory took hold upon the head of the chief ruler Satan, and delivered him unto the angels and said: 'Bind down with iron his hands and feet and neck and his mouth'. And then he delivered him into Hades saying: 'Take him and keep him safely until my second coming'.[87]

The Christian source, however, would be Revelation (20, 2-4):

> And he seized the dragon, than ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended.

Interestingly enough, in the lowest of St Bernard's three hells, described in a sermon for the celebration of Advent, the demons are tormented.[88]

Paradise is characterized in all Visions by light and/or fragrant odours. It is often a meadow or a field, sometimes with magnificent buildings. It is also a town surrounded by a high wall (Rev. 21). In the *Vision of Adomnán* (par. 11), paradise is a city surrounded by 'seven crystal walls of various hue (. . .) each wall higher than the wall that is before it'. But, as in the *Vision of Drycthelm*, the wall surrounding the three different enclosures in paradise in the *Vision of Tnugdal* has neither doors nor windows.

The Water of Life and the Tree of Life are both found in the *Vision of Tnugdal* and in Rev. (22,1-2) as an element of paradise. In the Tree of the *Vision of Tnugdal*, however, live 'many birds of various colours and different voices singing chants and descant'. This motif belongs to the pagan and Christian Celtic otherworld. In *Serglige Con Culainn* (The Sickbed of CuChulainn), the royal stronghold of the fairy land is

86 St J.D. Seymour, 'The Eschatology of the Early Irish Church', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, XIV (1923) 187-188.

87 M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1955) 136, mentioned by R. Mearns, *op. cit.*, 30.

88 J. Le Goff, *La Naissance du Purgatoire*, 198; J. Leclercq and H.M. Rochais (eds), *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, (Roma 1963) vol. VI/1, 12: *In aliis siquidem infernis homines, sed in isto ad praesens cruciantur daemones.*

described as having at the eastern door three purple trees upon the branches of which birds sing softly to the children from the royal fort. Then at the entrance to the enclosure there is a silver tree from the branches of which comes beautiful and harmonious music and on which the sun shines like gold. And there are also sixty trees, each of which feeds three hundred people with abundant food.[89] In *The Voyage of Snedgus and Mac Riagla*, Snedgus and Mac Riagla arrived at an island. One reads:

> par. 17: . . . wherein was a great tree with beautiful birds (on its branches). Atop of it was a great bird with a head of gold with wings of silver; and he tells them of the beginning of the world, and tells them of Christ's birth from Mary Virgin, and of His Baptism and His Passion and His Resurrection. And he tells tidings of Doom; and then all the birds used to beat their sides with their wings, so that showers of blood dropt out of their sides for dread of the signs of Doom . . .
>
> par. 18: Melodious was the music of those birds a-singing psalms and canticles, praising the Lord. For they were the birds of the Plain of Heaven, and neither trunk nor leaf of that tree decays.[90]

89 M. Dillon (ed. and tr.), *Serglige Con Culainn* (Columbus, Ohio: Hedrick 1941) translation pp. 40-41 and text p. 16, vv. 494-501:

> Atát arin dorus sair
> tli bile do chorcor-glain,
> dia ngair in énlaith búan bláith
> don macraid assin rígráith.
>
> Atá crand i ndorus liss,
> ní hétig cocetul friss,
> crand airgit ris tatin grían,
> cosmail fri hór a roníam.
>
> Atát and tri fichit crand,
> comraic nát chomraic a mbarr,
> bíatar tri cét do chach crund
> do mes ilarda imlum.

90 W. Stokes (ed. and tr.), 'The Voyage of Snedgus and Mac Riagla', *Revue Celtique*, 9 (1888) 21. C.S. Boswell (*op. cit*, 84-85) writes that the frequency of the association of the Tree of Life in paradise with a mystical bird or birds 'may be explained in part by the great popularity in early Christian symbolism of the Phoenix legend, in connection with the palm-tree and the Tree of Life; nevertheless the birds of Christian legends differ in several conspicuous respects from the traditional notion of the Phoenix, and approach far more closely to the Karshipta, the sacred bird of the Persians, adopted by them from the old Indo-Aryan mythology'.

In the *Voyage of St Brendan* white birds sing psalms praising the Lord.[91] In the *Vision of Adomnán* (par. 4) there are three stately birds perched in front of the King: 'They celebrate the eight (canonical) hours, praising and adoring the Lord, and the Archangels accompany them'.[92]

In different places in the World of Light Tnugdal saw monarchs and prelates who had recently departed. This motif is found since St Ambrose in the so-called political visions.[93] For example, Chilperic, the king's brother, was seen in a state of blessedness in Gregory of Tours' dream, while the king saw his brother being punished (*History of the Franks* VII,5). In Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* (IV,31), king Theodoric was 'seen' by a saintly hermit, led to a volcano and cast into the flaming abyss by Pope John and by the patrician Symmachus, both of whom the king had ill-treated. Barontus saw many of his brother monks in heaven (pars 8 and 11) but two eminent bishops in hell (par. 17). In the *Vision of Wetti*, Charlemagne is shown punished for his illicit sexual relationships. In the *Vision of Charles the Fat*, Charles saw his father Louis II (the German) and his prelates suffering torments, while his uncle Lothair was in Paradise.[94] And in the *Vision of Bernoldus*, Bernoldus saw various bishops in torment asking prayers for their relief.[95]

Clichés are regarded nowadays as lifeless expressions and borrowings as a sign of a poor imaginative power. In the medieval period, on the contrary, convention not only carried all the weight of authority but was also the supporting frame of creativity. For Marcus, the perception of the real was embedded in his knowledge of tradition. There was no

91 J.J. O'Meara (tr.), *The Voyage of St Brendan* (Dublin: Dolmen Press 1978) chap. 11.

92 It is not stated in the *Vision of Tnugdal* who these birds are. In the *Voyage of St Brendan* they are fallen angels who survived Lucifer's fall. In the *Voyage of Uí Chorra* the birds are the souls of human beings. In *The two Sorrows of Heaven* the souls of the just are also in the form of birds and await their doom in paradise. (G. Dottin (ed. and tr.), 'Les Deux Chagrins du Royaume du Ciel', *Revue Celtique*, 21 (1900) 347-387.) And in the *Vision of Adomnán* (par. 33) Elias is said to be under the Tree of Life in Paradise, listened to by 'the souls of the righteous, in form of bright white birds'.

93 J. Le Goff, *La Naissance du Purgatoire*, 90; A.B. van Os, *op. cit.*, 57.

94 *Textes d'histoire médiévale du Ve au XIe siècle*, R. Latouche, (Paris 1951) 144; J. Le Goff, *op. cit.*, 162-165.

95 *Visio Bernoldi*, in J.P. Migne, *P.L.*, 125, col. 1117.

contradiction between the two. On the practical plane, for example, the year 1149 can encompass Malachy's death (2 November 1148) since the year, according to Celtic tradition, began on 1 November.[96] On the spiritual plane, the themes of humility and obedience, main *topoi* of prefaces, were not in contradiction with, for instance, the precepts of the Benedictine Rule. Therefore Marcus' natural Celtic attachment to tradition combined with a monastic education not only drives him to understand and explain reality in accordance with Celtic, Christian and literary conventions, but nourishes his complex and original vision of the otherworld. One is inclined to agree with A.B. van Os when he writes: 'It seems as if the author has freely borrowed from all visions he knew and, gifted with more imagination than any of his precursors, has succeeded in blending the elements into a perfect unit'.[97] Indeed, in no case is Marcus enslaved by his sources. He appears to have read widely and from his knowledge draws an idea, a sentence or an expression because it fits his own view of the story that he sets himself to tell. This is particularly striking in his use of the Holy Scriptures, his main source of illustration and quotation.[98] Many of Marcus' quotations are not exact but the meaning always seems to be respected. The theme of foolishness (found in his prologue), for example, seems to have been inspired by St Paul's advice:

96 See above, pp 23-24.

97 A.B. van Os, *op. cit.*, 55. Similarly R. Verdeyen, in 'A propos de la Vision de Tondale', *Nuovi Studi Medievali*, 1 (1923-24) 238, writes: 'Tous les éléments disparates, disséminés dans les visions qui s'étaient succédé au cours de plusieurs siècles, Marcus les réunit dans un cadre solidement charpenté'.

98 According to the study made by H.J. Lawlor ('The Biblical Text in Tundal's Vision', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 36 C (1924) 351-375), Marcus relied mainly on an old Latin text for the *Gospel*, the *Apocalypse*, the *Acts* and the *Epistles* of St James and St Peter. H.J. Lawlor specifies (p. 375) that Marcus 'seems to have read the Pauline Epistle in a text which was mainly old Latin but not without Vulgate mixture. On the other hand his Psalter. . . seems to have been Vulgate with old Latin mixture'. More precisely St J.D. Seymour ('Studies in the Vision of Tnugdal', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 37 C (1926) 101-102) showed that certain words and phrases which occur in the *Vision* are either borrowed from Irish liturgies such as the Book of Dimma and the Stowe Missal or 'else are reminiscent of the same'. He refers to Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Oxford 1881). See also M. McNamara, 'The Text of the Latin Bible in the early Irish Church. Some data and desiderata', in *Ireland and Christendom*, P. Ní Chatháin and M. Richter (eds), (Stuttgart: Klett Cotta 1987) 7-55.

1 Cor. 3,18: If any one among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.

Two other quotations from the *Letters to the Corinthians*, which are related to this topic, were adopted by Marcus:

2 Cor. 11,1: I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness.

2 Cor. 11,19: For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves.

These are found in his address to the abbess:

> *Vos igitur, quia libenter suffertis insipientes, cum sitis ipsa sapiens, sustine etiam hic modicum quid insipientie mee.* (Thus, you who gladly suffer fools, being yourself wise, now bear also with me a little in my foolishness.)[99]

Even more interesting is Marcus' original handling of the theme of the cosmic vision. He describes what the virgins and angels can see and what Tnugdal experiences personally in the highest place of the World of Light:

> From the place where they stood they could see not only all the glory they had already seen but the tortures of the punishments we have previously described and, what is even more wonderful, they were able to contemplate the whole earth as if under a single ray of sun. For nothing could weaken one's view of creation once one has been granted to see the Creator of all. And in a marvellous way, while they stood in the same place without turning in another direction, they saw from this very same place, everything that was both in front of and behind them. He was also given not only vision but extraordinary knowledge, so that he had no more need to inquire about anything but knew clearly and fully everything he wanted.[100]

99 A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 4; and below p. 110.

100 See below p. 152-153; and A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 52-53:

Ab illo ergo loco, in quo tunc stabant, non solum omnem, quam ante viderant, gloriam, verum etiam predictarum supplicia penarum videbant, et quod magis miramur, terrarum orbem quasi sub uno solis radio videre valebant. Non enim quicquam poterat creature visum obtundere, cui semel concessum est, omnium creatorem videre. Et miro modo, cum starent in eodem loco, in quo prius steterant, non se vertentes in aliam

The first half of the description reminds one of the *Vision of St Benedict*. Before his death St Benedict saw the whole world gathered up before his eyes in what appeared to be a single ray of light and, in this dazzling display, the soul of the Bishop of Capua being carried away by angels up to heaven in a ball of fire (Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II,35).[101] While Benedict saw the vision from this world, Tnugdal on the contrary was situated in the highest part of heaven. He was rather like St Salvius (Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks* VII,1) who states:

> ... I was raised up by two angels and carried to the highest pinnacle of heaven, until I seemed to have beneath my feet not only this squalid earth of ours, but the sun and the moon, the clouds and the stars.[102]

He was also like Fursey:

> When Fursey had been carried up to a great height, he was told by his angel guides to look back at the world. As he looked down, he saw what appeared to be a gloomy valley beneath him, and four fires in the air, not far from one another. Asking what these were, the angels told him that they were the fires which were to burn and consume the world.[103]

The originality of Tnugdal's cosmic vision when compared with these appears in the fact that the knowledge acquired is not only spatial (as in the *Vision of St Salvius*), not only temporal (as in the *Vision of Fursey*) and not only a glimpse of what is hidden to human eyes (as in the *Vision of Benedict*). It is a totality, being at the same time spatial, intellectual and spiritual.

These few examples show Marcus' handling of his matter. He is the recipient of a whole tradition both continental and Celtic. But, as a true writer, he is able to recreate a world of its own.

partem, cunctos tamen ex eodem loco ante et retro positos videbant. Non solum autem visus, verum etiam scientia dabatur ei insolita, ita ut non sibi esset opus interrogare amplius aliqua, set omnia sciebat aperte et integre, quecunque volebat.

101 For the source of the *Vision of Benedict* see P. Courcelle, 'La vision cosmique de saint Benoît', *Revue Augustinienne*, 13 (1967) 97-117.

102 L. Thorpe (tr.), *The History of the Franks* (Harmondsworth 1974) 387.

103 Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*, L. Sherley-Price (tr.), revised by R.E. Latham (Hardmonsworth 1977) 173.

One cannot but speculate with regard to Marcus' milieu. For example, in which monastic school did he study? Such conjecture arises not so much from his wide-ranging sources and use of rhetorical devices. It springs rather from the fact that his Latin possesses puzzling features. In the opinion of J-M. Picard, Marcus' text does not contain the most obvious characteristics of Hiberno-Latin as found in the eleventh- and twelfth-century saints' lives written in Ireland.[104] On the contrary, this lack of an Irish-speaking influence is similarly absent from the best Hiberno-Latin writings of the Golden Age such as those of Columbanus and Adomnán.[105] However, Marcus' style is awkward and cumbersome and altogether not as elegant as theirs. Nevertheless the correctness of his syntax implies a training in a school where the traditional teaching of grammar was still upheld. Therefore one wonders whether part of Marcus' training did not take place in one of the Irish foundations on the continent. It is, however, unlikely that he was one of the monks left by Saint Malachy at Clairvaux in 1140 to be trained as a Cistercian. One can presume that Marcus was not very young when he wrote the *Vision*, not only because of the vastness of his knowledge but because his intention to write the life and miracles of Nemias, as St Bernard did for St Malachy, would suggest that Marcus knew the bishop of Cloyne very well. Considering that Nemias died in 1148/49 at the age of ninety-five, Marcus could well have been a middle-aged man.

What is worse, Marcus never states to which monastery or order he belongs. Rúadán, the patron saint of the monastery of Lorrha, said to Tnugdal:

> *Ego sum, ait, Ruadanus, patronus tuus, cui jure debitor es sepulture.* ('I am Rúadán, he said, your patron, to whom you owe your burial by right.')[106]

104 On the latinity of these Lives, see W-G. Most, *The Syntax of the Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Washington 1946).

105 See J.W. Smit, *Studies in the language and style of Columba the Younger* (Amsterdam 1971); J-M. Picard, 'Une préfiguration du latin Carolingien, la syntaxe de la *Vita Columbae* d'Adomnán, auteur irlandais du VIIe siècle', *Romano Barbarica*, 6 (1981-82) 235-290.

106 A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 53; and below p. 154.

St J.D. Seymour, taking for granted that Marcus identifies himself with Tnugdal, therefore states: 'Marcus had some connection with Lorrha, either his family had come from there or he himself had entered on the religious life in that monastery'.[107] H. Spilling remarks that Rúadán's greeting suits a monk better than a knight because the right of burial in the graveyard of a monastery was, with the exception of royalty, given only to people belonging to the monastery.[108] This does not seem to hold for Ireland. According to J. Ryan, the laity could also have the privilege of being laid to rest in the holy ground of the monastic cemetery. This privilege was 'constantly granted'. With regard to graveyards for royalty, the same author adds that 'Clonmacnois had a pre-eminence all its own. . . but Iona, too, was distinguished in this respect, as were Glendaloch and Ferns'.[109] The monastery of Lorrha, however, became a priory of Augustinian canons at some date after 1140.

Another alternative appears from the fact that Marcus quotes on several occasions from the Benedictine Rule[110] and that he is indebted to the Benedictine tradition of meditational literature. N.F. Palmer underlines how the justice of God is stressed throughout the *Vision* in order to inspire the reader with the fear of God and recalls that this

107 St J.D. Seymour, 'Studies in the Vision of Tundal', *op. cit.*, 88.

108 H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 10 note 33.

109 J. Ryan, *Irish Monasticism* (Dublin 1931) 289. M.J. O'Kelly, in his study of Church Island, declares with regard to the large number of burials found around the church, that 'it is unlikely that all of these were the bodies of deceased monks — indeed since at least one of them was a woman'. M.J. O'Kelly, 'Church Island, near Valencia, Co Kerry', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 59 (1957-59) 117. I owe this reference to Mr Charles Doherty.

110 A. Wagner, *op. cit.*, xxvii, gives three examples:

1) '. . .*qui* (*i.e.* monachi, canonici, sanctimoniales) *sive per tonsuram sive per habitum deo mentiri noscuntur.*' (Wagner's ed., p. 29,12.) and Rule I,7: '*qui* (*i.e.* monachi. . .) *mentiri Deo per tonsuram noscuntur.*' (See A. de Vogüé (tr.) and J. Neufville (ed.), *La Règle de St Benoît*, Sources Chrétiennes, 6 vols, Paris: Cerf, 1972, vol. 1 p. 438).

2) '. . .*prelati et potentes seculi, qui desiderant preesse, non ut prossint set ut presint.* . .' (Wagner's ed., p. 38,10.) and Rule LXIV,8: '*sciat que* (*i.e.* abbas) *sibi oportere prodesse magis quam praesse.*' (See A. de Vogüé (tr.) and J. Neufville (ed.), vol. 2 p. 651).

3) The Angel's speech explaining that monks and nuns are rewarded inside the enclosure made of silver because of their obedience (Wagner's ed., p. 49,1- 11.) shows the influence of Rules V and VI. (See A. de Vogüé (tr.) and J. Neufville (ed.), vol. 1 p. 466-473).

theology of 'fear' was formulated by Augustine and passed down to the Middle Ages through the works of Gregory the Great, Anselm and Bernard. He adds: 'The inducement of compunction through fear by meditating upon the ''Last Things'' is firmly established in the Benedictine tradition, and meditation upon the ''Last Things'' is listed among the *instrumenta bonorum operum* in the Benedictine Rule (cap. 4)'.[111] If Marcus belonged to a Benedictine monastery in Ireland there would be three possible places. The first which comes to mind is the priory of St Mary, Ross Carbery, a dependency of St James' Abbey, Würzburg. This was perhaps founded between 1140 and 1148 by Nemias, bishop of Cloyne.[112] The other monasteries would be Lorrha, which may have possessed a Benedictine abbey founded by St Deicola,[113] and Cashel (the daughter house of St James, Ratisbon), the Cormac's Chapel of which, consecrated in 1134, was the chapel of the Benedictine monks.[114]

Whatever may have been the monastic order to which Marcus belonged, he contributed to the great Irish missionary tradition. This appears in the function of the *Vision*. Besides serving the cause of the reformers, Marcus fulfils the mission of warning people of the reality of the otherworld. He brings a proof of the existence of a life beyond death and thus follows the example of Gregory the Great who has the same aim in the fourth Book of the *Dialogues*. First he tries to impress on his readers the reality of Tnugdal's experience. This is proved by his accuracy with regard to historical matters and by the vivid manner in which he describes the happening of the vision. In this respect one is reminded of Hildegard of Bingen, who entitles the prologue of the *Scivias*:

111 N.F. Palmer, *op. cit.*, 14.

112 A. Gwynn, 'Ireland and Würzburg in the Middle Ages', *Irish Ecclesiatical Record*, 78 (1952) 404; A. Gwynn and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses. Ireland*, 107.

113 A. Gwynn and R.N. Hadcock, *op. cit.*, 109, refer to L.A. Alemand, *Monasticum Hibernicum* (Paris 1690) 68.

114 A. Gwynn and R.N. Hadcock, *op. cit.*, 102-103 and 105; H.G. Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press 1955) vol. I, 113-120; L. de Paor, 'Cormac's Chapel: the beginning of Irish romanesque', *North Munster Studies*, E. Rynne (ed.), (Limerick: The Thomond Archaeological Society 1967) 133-145; F. Henry, *Irish Art in the Romanesque Period (1020-1170 A.D.)* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press 1970) 170-174.

> *Protestificatio veracium visionum A Deo fluentium* (Asseveration of true visions springing from God.)[115]

She states the precise date on which it was written:

> *Factum est in millesimo centesimo quadragesimus primo Filii Dei Iesu Christi incarnationis anno, cum quadraginta duorum annum septemque mensium essem* . . . (I did it in the year one thousand one hundred and forty-one at the age of forty-two and seven months. . .)[116]

She finishes the introduction by a reference to historical events:

> *In diebus Heinrici moguntini archiepiscopi et Conradi Romanorum regis et Cunonis abbatis in monte beati Disibodi pontificis, sub papa Eugenio, hae uisiones et uerba facta sunt. Et dixi et scripsi haec non secundum adinuentionem cordis mei aut ullius hominis, sed ut ea in caelestibus uidi, audiui et percepi per secreta mysteria Dei.* (In the time of Henry, archbishop of Mainz, Conrad King of the Romans and Cuno, abbot of Disibodenberg, under Pope Eugenius, these visions and words have been completed. And I have said and written these things, not according to the invention of my mind or that of any man but as I saw, heard and perceived them in Heaven through God's secret mysteries.)[117]

The two writers have thus used the same means in order to prove the reality of the event.

Furthermore, Marcus' understanding of the otherworld is utterly real. C. Carozzi points out that while Marcus' perception of the beyond belongs to the same vein as that of Hugues de St Victor and St Bernard, it is in opposition to the perception of Honorius Augustodunensis who tended in his later works to develop a 'spiritual' understanding of the otherworld.[118] Marcus merely tells the story: he does not enter into any controversy. His eschatological vision is nourished by a Celtic

115 Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, A. Führkötter and A. Carlevaris (eds), Corpus Christianorum XLIII (Turnholt: Brepols 1978). J-M. Picard's translation.

116 *Ibid.*

117 *Ibid.*, 6.

118 C. Carozzi, 'Structure et Fonction de la Vision de Tnugdal', *op. cit.*, 225-234. Carozzi, however, is mistaken in stressing the influence of Honorius' *Gemma Animae* in Marcus' use of *mysterium* and *tragoedia* and in emphasizing the originality of Marcus

conception of a supra reality conveyed by the real world. This can be perceived by his symbolic use of numbers and also by the fact that he starts his introduction with a description of Ireland, a description less from a personal or realistic point of view than from a mythical and symbolical one. Ireland appears as an earthly paradise from which Life springs. There is found not only an abundance of natural products but also wine although there are no vines; not only is there an absence of poisonous animals but wood, horns and clay from Ireland brought into another country can drive out venom from there:

> Ireland is an island situated at the extremity of the western ocean and stretches out from south to north. It is outstanding for its lakes and rivers, planted with woods, most fertile in cereals, opulent in milk, honey and all kinds of fish and game, lacking in vines but rich in wine. Snakes, frogs, toads and all venomous animals are unknown there to the extent that its wood, leather thongs, horns and clay are known to triumph over all poisons.[119]

In this description, inspired by the one given by Bede (*Hist. Eccl.*, I, 1),[120] and by the same source from which Giraldus Cambrensis derived his information, reality — that is the natural fertility of the land and its

who opposes the two words. According to J-M. Picard, *tragoedia* is used by Marcus in the plural form and therefore cannot — as Carozzi assumes — mean 'tragedy'.

119 See below p. 111, and A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 5-6: *Hybernia igitur insula est in ultimo occidentali oceano posita, ab austro in boream porrecta, stagnis et fluminibus precipua, nemoribus insita, frugibus fertilissima, lacte et melle omnibusque piscationis et venationis generibus opulenta, vinearum expers, set vini dives, serpentium, ranarum, bufonum et omnium animalium venena ferentium ita inscia, ut ejus lignum aut corrigia aut cornu aut pulvis omnia vincere noscantur venena.*

120 Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*., L. Sherley-Price (tr.), and revised by R.E. Latham, 39-40:
Ireland is far more favoured than Britain by latitude, and by its mild and healthy climate. Snow rarely lies longer than three days, so that there is no need to store hay in summer for winter use or to build stables for beasts. There are no reptiles, and no snake can exist there; for although often brought over from Britain, as soon as the ship nears land, they breathe the scent of its air, and die. In fact, almost everything in this isle confers immunity to poison, and I have seen that folk suffering from snake-bite have drunk water in which scraping from the leaves of books from Ireland had been steeped, and that this remedy checked the spreading poison and reduced the swelling. The island abounds in milk and honey, and there is no lack of vines, fish, and birds, while red deer and roe are widely hunt.

notable absence of snakes — is transcended in order to reveal another indisputable reality: Ireland as the 'Centre of the World'.[121] The authenticity of Bede's description has more weight in terms of reality for Marcus than his own personal knowledge of the country. Reality visible to the eyes of the flesh is a bridge to reality visible to the eyes of the spirit. It is the latter that Marcus calls *mysterium* when, in the prologue, he refers to Tnugdal's vision. Marcus follows the same tradition which in early Irish writers appears in their fondness of expressions such as 'to see with the eyes of the mind' or 'the eyes of the heart'.[122]

This *mysterium* — that is, unveiled reality —[123] encompasses also the change which occurs in Tnugdal. In the introduction Tnugdal has been presented as a frivolous person:

> This man was of a young age, of noble lineage, had a happy face and an elegant appearance; he had been brought up in the manner of the court, was carefully dressed, arrogant in spirit and not ill-trained in martial arts. But I cannot say this without pain: his confidence in his physical appearance and strength was matched by an equally bad neglect of the eternal salvation of his soul. As he himself often confessed with tears on many subsequent occasions, he used to become angry whenever anyone mentioned, even briefly, the salvation of his soul. He did not care about God's Church and did not even want to see Christ's poor. He gave away whatever he had to jesters, players and jugglers.[124]

121 When in 1183 Giraldus Cambrensis described Ireland (*The History and Topography of Ireland*, Part I), he did not perceive this supra real dimension of Bede's description. On the contrary he aimed at realism, that is reality at a superficial level. On the one hand he tried to explain that the abundance of wine had nothing miraculous in it but came from trading with Poitou (I,2). Similarly he found an explanation for the absence of snakes but accepted (because of trusted witnesses) that both the soil of Ireland and boot-thongs made from the hides of animals bred in the country ('when cut up in little pieces and drunk with water') were powerful antidotes against poison (I,23- 24). See *The History and Topography of Ireland*, J.J. O'Meara (tr.), (Harmondsworth 1982).

122 See H. Richardson, 'Number and Symbol in early Christian Irish Art', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 114 (1984) 28-47.

123 See H. de Lubac, *Exégèse Médiévale* (Paris: Aubier 1959) II, 399: Le mystère 'est l'élément intérieur, la réalité cachée sous la lettre et signifiée par le signe, la vérité qu'indique la figure. . .'.

124 Below p. 111-112; A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 6-7: *Erat namque vir prefatus etate juvenis, genere nobilis, vultu hilari, aspectus decorus, curialiter nutritus, vestibus*

After his vision Tnugdal comes back to life completely changed; he has been converted by his experience:

> *Sumens igitur corpus domini cum gratiarum actione omnia, que habuit, pauperibus dispersit et signum sancte crucis suis vestimentis, quibus vestiebatur, superponi jussit. Cuncta vero, que viderat, nobis postmodum recitavit, et bonam vitam nos ducere monuit, verbumque dei, quod ante nescierat, cum magna devotione et humilitate ac scientia predicabat.* (Having received the Lord's body with thanksgiving, he distributed everything he had to the poor and ordered the sign of the cross to be applied to the clothes he wore. After a while he related to us everything he had seen and warned us to lead a good life, and he preached the word of God, which he had not known before, with great devotion, humility and knowledge.)[125]

N.F. Palmer thinks that Tnugdal is a model to follow because the work resembles a saint's life. 'In order to imitate the visionary the reader must come to share the insights gained in the vision. Through fear of death and hell and through fear of not being worthy of heaven he must recognize his sinfulness and repent.'[126] H. Spilling's idea that the stages of Tnugdal's journey through the otherworld represent the stages of his conversion experience[127] suggests that Marcus offers through the *Vision of Tnugdal* another mode of *peregrinatio*. Indeed an 'interiorisation' of *peregrinatio* appeared in the twelfth century with St Anselm and particularly St Bernard.[128] When Tnugdal came back to life he asked that the sign of the cross be applied to the clothes he wore. He

compositus, mente magnanimus, militari arte non mediocriter instruetus, habilis, affabilis atque jocundus. Verum, quod ego non sine dolore possum dicere, quanto confidebat in forma corporis et fortitudine, tanto minus curabat de animo sue eterna salute. Nam, ut ipse modo sepius cum lacrimis solet confiteri, gravabat ipsum, si quis ei de salute anime aliquid licet breviter vellet dicere. Ecclesiam dei neglexerat, pauperes autem Christi etiam videre nolebat. Scurris mimis et joculatoribus pro vana gloria distribuerat quicquid habebat.

125 A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 55; and below p. 156. See also the introduction in the text p. 113.

126 N.F. Palmer, *op. cit.*, 13.

127 H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 48-59.

128 See J. Leclercq, 'Monachisme et pérégrination du IXe au XIIe siècle', *Studia Monastica*, 3 (1961) 33- 52.

could not have intended to go on a Crusade, as the second Crusade was just ending, and there was none intended in the near future. This cross is thus the sign of his changed life and his intention to progress in a new direction. Therefore along with the external *peregrinatio*, that is the traditional going into a voluntary exile in order to live nearer God, as, for instance, Marcus did in going to Ratisbon, Marcus proposes an interior *peregrinatio* represented by Tnugdal's experience. To change one's life is metaphorically as eventful as travelling to and settling down in another country. For this reason progression in the dark side of the otherworld appears to Tnugdal's soul as a narrow, difficult and dangerous path.[129] But progression is transformed into a smooth ascent in the luminous side of the otherworld. If H. Spilling is right in thinking that the beyond as a path is a revival of a tradition which remained limited to Ireland,[130] this is another example of Marcus' adaptation of a traditional pattern in a new perspective. Since Marcus must have firmly believed, according to the Irish tradition, in the physical and spiritual ascetical nature of the 'external' *peregrinatio*, he understands the new movement toward 'interior' *peregrinatio* as an experience as real as a physical one. True to his tendency towards a synthesis, he does not insist on the greater merit of one rather than the other. A choice must be made according to one's possibilities. This is perhaps the message behind Marcus' humble declaration at the opening of the epilogue:

> *Set nos, quia vitam ejus imitari non possumus, hec saltem ad utilitatem legentium scribere studuimus.* (As for us, since we cannot imitate his life, we have at least applied ourselves to write these things for the benefit of the readers.)[131]

129 The theme of the road in the beyond reminds one of the *Aeneid*. After Aeneas' entry into the cave and his fight against unreal forms, Virgil writes:

> (VI, 295): *Hinc via, Tartarei quae fert Acherontis ad undas.* (Hence a road leads to the waters of Tartareon Acheron.)

Further on, the Sibyl warns Aeneas:

> (VI, 540): *Hic locus est, partes ubi se via findit in ambas.* (Here is the place where the road parts in twain).

130 H. Spilling, *op. cit.*, 48-59.

131 A. Wagner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 56; and below p. 156.

To argue as to whether the *Vision of Tnugdal* was meant specifically for a foreign public or the brethren of Ratisbon or to be brought back to Ireland is to misunderstand the sense of universality Marcus tries to convey. First, he writes for anyone who does not believe in the reality of a life beyond death. He certainly has in mind non-Irish people, for he presents Ireland in the introduction as if it were not known. The *Vision* is directed also towards the brethren in Germany, as it refers to a Munster saint revered in the *Schottenklöster* and to an Irish bishop whom they may have known as a monk. Furthermore Marcus indirectly expresses their gratitude towards their benefactors in Ireland, while giving a large place to king Cormac to whom the abbot of St James was related. The *Vision* is also meaningful to Irish people. It shows a personal attachment to the MacCarthys. It serves the purpose of the reformers by describing in particular the terrible punishment for the transgression of Christian practices especially in sexual matters, a delicate subject which they could not put forward too openly without antagonizing people. It would therefore appear that Marcus is cleverly aiming at a large public. The fact that the Latin text was so widespread in Germany reflects rather the contemporary interest in this type of work[132] than Marcus' intention to write merely for a German public.

If Marcus hid his identity[133] he did not conceal his nationality and his personality. The *Vision of Tnugdal* speaks for him. It is a complex work representing a deep thinking with regard to the eschatology of the otherworld understood as a reality and a totality. It is a *summa* of continental and Celtic tradition blended by a powerful mind. The two traditions are not opposed to but enrich each other and Marcus' *Vision of Tnugdal* illustrates the eminent role Ireland played throughout the Middle Ages in the creation of the Western Christian culture.

132 This was the time, for instance, of the visionary writings of Hildegard of Bingen (1141-1179), of the visions of Elizabeth of Schönau (1152-1164) and the *Visio Godeschalci* (1189).

133 There has been a suggestion that Marcus was Honorius Augustodunensis: M-O. Garrigues, 'L'Auteur de la *Visio Tnugdali*', *Studia Monastica*, 29 (1987) 19-62. This article has come to my attention too late to be discussed here. I would like, however, to point out that while there is some speculation with regard to the nationality of Honorius (see V.I.J. Flint, 'The Career of Honorius Augustodunensis', *Revue Bénédictine*, 82 (1972) 84), Marcus was undoubtedly an Irishman.

Appendix

P.A. Breatnach (ed.), *Die Regensburger Schottenlegende — Libellus de fundacione ecclesie Consecrati Petri* (München: Arbeo-Gesellschaft 1977) 238-240, translated by J-M. Picard:

Nunciis venientibus, ut sanctorum Deus voluit, sine aliqua controversia et perturbacione ad regem Hybernie nomine Conchubur O Brien, cognomine Slapveir Salach et presentaverunt se et litteras suas (ei) aliisque principibus et retulerunt eis legaciones suas et, qua racione eis missi fuissent. Tunc rex terre cum ducibus et principibus auditis litteris et legacionibus auribus perceperunt benignis et plus solito more gavisi sunt de adventu et prosperitate missorum, quoniam fama precesserat undique adventantes de conversacione existencium in Alemannia ad Hyberniam. Statim rex fecit eos hospitari et, ut honor requirit, tractari. Habito consilio et tractatu regis et principum super negocio missorum convocavit rex terre nobiliores et inivit consilium cum eis, qualiter nuncii essent remissi cum decencia regia subsequente populi devocione. Qui dederunt tale responsum et consilium, ut benefieret remittendis. Audita voluntate senatus et preeunte cuiuslibet principum inspiracione rex immediate convocavit monachos Alemanniacos ad suam presenciam et principum et fecit vocari scriniarios, camerarios suos, quibus precepit dicens: 'Aurum depositum, thesaurum reconditum nostrorum parentum, regum et reginarum, in medium deferte'. Illi audito verbo iussum regium impleverunt et attulerunt scrinea et vascula plura de electo auro puro et mundo et aperierunt archam regiam et duas ocreas latas et longas fecit impleri de electo auro puro et mundo et constitui subsidium tale legatis populo assistente. Quas quidem ocreas fecit impleri scutella argentea auro sine mensura, pondere et metreta et consui firmiter in principum presencia et exterius signari cum suo sigillo sigillisque principum spiritualium secularium ve. Insuper dedit nunciis de Alemannia mille

marcas argenti puri et electi adiunctis aliis variis muneribus diversis et plurimis. Tunc rex dixit principibus suis: 'Placetne in vestris oculis me dedisse tantas elemosinas loco illi?' Et responderunt regi ipsis placere, immo divinitus esse eius magnitudini inspiratum. Et rex ait eis: 'Nec vos pudeat de rebus a Deo vobis collatis sancto illi loco et fratribus ibidem Deo degentibus conferre grata caritatis subsidia tantum, quantum Deus cuilibet inspiraverit'. Qui statim audita regis exhortacione ut nobiles columpne et boni accessores regis optimi transmiserunt celeres cursores, quilibet ad propria pro pecunia reposita, et tradiderunt presente rege Hybernie pondera multa argentea et aurea nunciis Alemannicanis ad Consecratum Petrum. Hiis rite expletis rex Hybernie preparavit iter redeundi nunciis Alemanniam in rebus et expensis cum iocundidate et honore tali, quod non est creditum unquam d(om)um venisse tam honeratos nuncios in auro et argento et copia munerum diversorum de fine mundi in Alemannia, qualiter isti venerant.

(The envoys arrived, God of the saints willing, without any opposition or trouble at the court of the king of Ireland named Conchobar O'Brien, nicknamed *Slapveir Salach*, and presented themselves with their letters to the king and his lords and told them about their mission and the reason why they had been sent. The king of the land, with his lords and barons, received and heard the letters and the content of the message with benevolent ears and rejoiced more than was customary on their arrival and safe journey, because the universal fame of the way of life of those who lived in Germany had preceded the newcomers to Ireland. The king immediately ordered that they should be taken to their lodgings and treated as honour required. Having deliberated in council with his lords on the business of the envoys, the king of the land summoned the nobles and held a council with them to know how the envoys would be sent back in a manner fitting to the king and in accordance with the wishes of the people. The response and counsel they gave was to show generosity to the departing messengers. Having heard the will of the council and anticipating any suggestion from the lords, the king summoned the monks from Germany to his presence and that of the lords and had his book-keepers and chamberlains called and gave them the following orders: 'Bring here the gold which is deposited, the treasure put away by our ancestors the kings and the

queens'. Having heard this, they obeyed the king's order and brought a great number of caskets and vases of the best and purest gold and they opened the king's coffer and he had two long and wide thigh-boots filled with the best and purest gold and this gift was made to the envoys in the presence of the people. Also, he had the thigh-boots filled with silver dishes and gold without counting, weighing or measuring and had them strongly stitched in the presence of the lords and had them stamped on the outside with his own seal and the seals of the lords both secular and religious. On top of this he gave the envoys from Germany a thousand marks of excellent pure silver to which he added a great number of various other presents.

Afterwards the king said to his lords: 'Are you not pleased that I gave so many alms to that monastery?' And they told the king they were pleased and even that his magnanimity had been divinely inspired. The king said to them: 'Do not be ashamed to grant gracious gifts of charity from among the objects granted to you by God to this holy monastery and to the brothers who spend their life there in God, in whatever amount God may inspire in each of you'. As soon as they heard the king's exhortation, as the noble supports and good helpers of the excellent king, they sent out fast messengers each to his home for his reserve of money and in the presence of the king they gave a great amount of gold and silver to the envoys from Germany for Weih St Peter. When the ceremony was over, the king of Ireland had provisions and other things prepared for the envoys' return to Germany with joy and such honour that one cannot believe that envoys ever came home so laden with gold and silver and a wealth of various gifts as these did, from the end of the world to Germany.)

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THE VISION OF TNUGDAL

TEXT

Prologue

To the venerable Lady G . . ., devoted to God and abbess by God's gift, Brother Marcus, her devoted servant: may his service show strength and readiness. As many are called but few are chosen,[1] it does not require great argumentation, as when proving the truth of something doubtful, to state that the woman who is praised by many is indeed worthy of praise. Since from the beginning, as the prophet says, the human race is much inclined to sin,[2] we think only that the most profound and most suitable matters should be presented to a woman whom we judge to be above reproach despite the small flourishes of language her reputation has occasioned, for she can say with the apostle: 'We are a sweet odour to God'.[3] This is why, holy virgin and Lady G . . ., we cannot in any way deny you your modest request, full of charity, good intent and great devotion, although we could scarcely interrupt it with praises worthy of your presence. For, as a learned man among the orthodox Christians said: 'Charity provides the strength that is denied by ignorance', we shall follow his steps and, trusting in your holy prayers, we shall set aside our modesty and shall not feel ashamed of showing you our foolishness. For, obedience is better than sacrifices,[4] especially when employed for higher things, and we trust that your wisdom would commiserate with me rather than mock me on account of my foolishness. For your wisdom has so wished that our pen, although uneducated, should translate the mystery which was shown to Tnugdal, an Irishman, from the vernacular into the Latin language, and that we should send it to you for copying under your vigilance. Although brief, this work is certainly useful. However, while most devoted to you, I am incompetent and almost ignorant of Latin eloquence, but I am not unhappy to offer this story, for God loves a happy giver,[5] supposing that my small and meagre talent were able to recount it. But I ask that wherever a phrase of less conciseness has

1 Superior numbers in the text refer to biblical quotations which are listed below on page 158.

slipped through, your shrewd erudition should not feel shy about amending it and coining a proper one. So, accept this short little gift in simple style and unlearned speech with my devoted prayers, and, if you see in it something which is not so correct, impute it to our inexperience, but if, on the other hand, something in it happens to please your wisdom, attribute it to divine Grace and to your prayers and do not despise a good and true story even if you see that its literary style is not entirely proper. The style is ours indeed, but the work is of Christ. So, wise and auspicious lady, let us remember the proverb: 'If you cannot bear the vices of your friend, make them yours'. Thus, you who gladly suffer fools,[6] being yourself wise, now bear also with me a little in my foolishness.[7] However, we have written to you in good faith, especially since this vision has been related to us by the person who saw it.This vision was seen in the year one thousand one hundred and forty-nine from the Incarnation of the Lord, the second year of the expedition to Jerusalem of Conrad, king of the Romans and the fourth year of the pontificate of Pope Eugene III, the same year as he returned to Rome from the regions of Gaul. Also in the same year Malachy, bishop of Down and legate to the Irish, through whose life and doctrine the whole western Church shines, died at Clairvaux on his way to Rome. His life, full of miracles, is being written in magnificent style by Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, and we will mention him in due course, God willing. In the same year also, Nemias, bishop of Cloyne, a man distinguished for his wisdom, his birth and his holiness, departed from the painful struggle of this world to the joys of eternal life, a holy and venerable elder of ninety-five years, still in his own episcopal chair. We shall say some words about his life and miracles, because we know that you have asked for examples of saints for your edification. But since it is not our intention to keep on writing grandiloquent sentences, we shall hasten, with the help of God, to start the little work which has been entrusted to us.

End of the prologue

Beginning of the vision of an Irish knight written for the edification of the multitude

Ireland is an island situated at the extremity of the western ocean and stretches out from south to north. It is outstanding for its lakes and rivers, planted with woods, most fertile in cereals, opulent in milk, honey and all kinds of fish and game, lacking in vines but rich in wine. Snakes, frogs, toads and all venomous animals are unknown there, to the extent that its wood, leather thongs, horns and clay are known to triumph over all poisons. It is quite famous for its religious men and women but is also well known for its cruel battles. Near it, there is England on the south side; to the east are the Scots as well as the Britons who are called Welsh by some; to the north are the Shetlanders and the Orcadians and, on the opposite side, to the south, are the Spaniards. This island has thirty-four dioceses, the bishops of which are under two metropolitans. Armagh is the metropole of the northern Irish, but Cashel is the most eminent see in the south, and there a nobleman was born, called Tnugdal, whose wickedness — or rather the workings of God's mercy on him — are the subject of our little work.

This man was of a young age, of noble lineage, had a happy face and an elegant appearance; he had been brought up in the manner of the court, was carefully dressed, arrogant in spirit and not ill-trained in martial arts. But I cannot say this without pain: his confidence in his physical appearance and strength was matched by an equally bad neglect of the eternal salvation of his soul. As he himself confessed with tears on many subsequent occasions, he used to become angry whenever anyone mentioned, even briefly, the salvation of his soul. He

did not care about God's Church and did not even want to see Christ's poor. He gave away whatever he had to jesters, players and jugglers. But when divine mercy chose to put an end to so much evil, he was challenged at the appointed time. For, according to the testimony of many inhabitants of the city of Cork who were close to him at the time, he lay dead for a period of three days and three nights, during which he learned bitterly about all the sins he had previously committed with pleasure. His subsequent life bears witness to all the suffering he underwent. Indeed he suffered many kinds of unbelievable and intolerable torments, the order and name of which we have not been loth to write to you, for the sake of strengthening your devotion, just as we learned them from the mouth of the person who saw and suffered them.

Tnugdal had many cronies among whom one was his debtor in an exchange contract and owed him three horses. He waited for the final limit which had been set for repayment and, when the time had elapsed, he went to visit his friend. He was made most welcome and stayed there for three nights before he started discussing the matter outstanding. When the other answered that he did not have at hand what he asked, he fell into a rage and began to prepare to set off the way he had come. But the debtor, wishing to placate his friend, asked him to be so good as to agree to have a meal with him before leaving. As he found it impossible to refuse his pleas, he sat down again and, having laid down the axe he held in his hand, began to take food with his companion. But God's mercy forestalled his appetite. For, struck by I know not what sudden occurrence, he was not able to lift to his mouth the hand he had stretched in front of him. Then he started to shout dreadfully and entrusted his axe, which he had previously laid down, to his friend's wife, saying: 'Keep my axe, for I am dying'. And with these words, his body immediately collapsed unconscious, as if there had never been any spirit in it. The symptoms of death are present: the hair is white, the forehead numb, the eyes hazy, the nose becomes pointed, the lips go pale, the chin falls and all the limbs of the body become stiff. The household rushes around, the food is taken away, the squires shout, the host moans, the body is laid down, bells are rung, the priest comes running, the population is astounded and the whole city is overcome by the sudden death of the good knight.

But let us not linger! From about the tenth hour on Wednesday until

the very same hour on Saturday he lay dead with no sign of life remaining in him except a slight warmth that was felt in his left side by those who conscientiously took the trouble to palpate his body. That is why they refused to bury him, precisely because they felt heat in this small part of him. But after this period, in the presence of the priest and the people who had gathered for his burial, he regained consciousness and, within an hour, began to breathe feebly. Everyone wondered, even though they knew the answer: 'Is it not so that when the spirit passes away it does not return?'[8] Then he looked around with a weak gaze and, when they asked him if he wanted to receive communion, he indicated that the Lord's body should be brought to him, and when he had taken it and drunk the wine, he started to praise God with thanksgiving, saying: 'O God, your mercy is greater than my wickedness though it is quite great. You showed me so many cruel trials, but you restored me to life and you brought me back from the depths of the earth'.[9] When he had said this, by written deed he gave away and distributed to the poor everything he had;[10] as for himself, he ordered that the redemptive sign of the cross be put upon him, and he vowed to abandon in every manner and for ever his former life. And he has related to us all the things he saw and suffered in the terms which follow:

CHAPTER ONE

The departure of the soul

As soon as he had shed the body and knew for sure that it was dead, the soul became frightened, conscious of his own state of sin, and did not know what to do. He wanted to go back to his own body but could not get in; he also wanted to go outside, but he was afraid to go anywhere. And so, this most miserable soul tossed and turned, conscious of his own state of sin and confident of nothing except God's mercy. He behaved this way for quite a long time, crying, wailing and shaking, for he did not know what to do, and then he saw coming towards him a multitude of foul spirits so great that not only did they fill the house and the courtyard where the dead body lay, but one could not see even a single place in all the streets and squares of the city which was not full of them. Yet, as they surrounded this poor soul, they endeavoured not to console him but on the contrary to distress him with these words: 'Let us sing the hymn of death which is due to this wretched soul, who is a child of death and food for the unquenchable fire, friend of darkness and enemy of the light'. And all turning towards him, they gnashed their teeth at him,[11] and in anger they lacerated their hideous cheeks with their nails, saying: 'Now, wretch, here are the people whom you chose, with whom you will go down to the roasting depths of Hell; feeder of scandal and lover of discord, why not show your arrogance? Why not commit adultery, why not fornicate? Where is your vanity and your vain gaiety? Where is your immoderate laugh? Where is your bravado thanks to which you used to insult many people? Why not wink now with your eyes as you used to do? Why no shuffling with your foot, beckoning with your finger, no evil scheming of your depraved heart?'[12] Terrified by these and similar utterances, the poor soul could do nothing but wail, expecting from all those around him the imminent death he had been threatened with. But He who does not want the death of the sinner,[13] the only One having the power to dispense the cure after death, the almighty Lord, just and merciful, who organises everything according to his own secret judgment, assuaged this misery according to his will.

CHAPTER TWO

The coming of the angel to meet the soul

So, he sent his angel to meet him. When Tnugdal saw him coming from afar like a great shining star, he cast untiring eyes over him, hoping to receive some advice from him. And as he drew near, the angel called him by his own name and greeted him with these words: 'Hail, Tnugdal, how do you fare?' But our unfortunate, seeing the beautiful youth — for he was of beautiful appearance in comparison with the sons of man — and hearing him call his name, burst into tears as much from fear as from joy and broke into these words: 'Alas, my lord and father, I am surrounded by the torments of Hell and have been overtaken by Death's snares'.[14] The angel said to him: 'You have just called me lord and father although you always had me everywhere with you and never found me worthy of such a name'. He answered: 'Lord, where did I ever see you? and where did I ever hear your most sweet voice?'. The angel answered him: 'I have always followed you since your birth, wherever you went, and you never wanted to heed my advice'. And, stretching his hand towards one of the foul spirits who insulted him more than the other slanderers, he said: 'Here is the one whose advice you used to trust while you took no notice at all of my wishes. But because God always shows forgiveness in his judgment,[15] his undeserved mercy will not fail even you. On the contrary, you will be fortunate and safe because you will suffer few of the many torments you would have suffered had not the mercy of our Redeemer come to your help. So, follow me and take care to remember whatever I shall show to you, for afterwards you must return to your body'. Then, the soul, utterly terrified, moved nearer to him, leaving the body over which he had previously been standing. However, when the demons heard

these words and realised they would not be able to carry out the ill-treatment with which they had threatened the soul, they turned their faces to Heaven,[16] saying: 'O what a cruel and unjust God He is, since He brings death to whomever He wants and restores life to whomever He wants but does not reward each according to his works and merits as He promised:[17] He frees souls who should not be freed and damns others who should not be damned'. With these words, they rose up against each other, and they injured one another with all possible kinds of wounds and withdrew in great affliction and in- dignation, leaving a great stench behind them. The angel moved forward and said to the soul: 'Follow me'. But he answered: 'Woe to me, my lord! If you go in front of me, they will drag me back and dispatch me to the everlasting flames'. The angel said to him: 'Do not fear them, for more are with us than with them.[18] If God is with us, who will be against us? One thousand will fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but they will not come near you. But, you will behold and see with your eyes the reward of the wicked.[19] And indeed, as I told you before, you will suffer a few of the many torments you deserve'. And with these words, they went on their way.

CHAPTER THREE

The first punishment, which is for homicides

They had travelled for quite a long time with no light other than the angel's brightness, until they came to a black and most frightening pit covered in the darkness of death. It was very deep and full of burning charcoals. It had an iron cover, which appeared to be six cubits thick and gave out an extreme heat exceeding that of the charcoals. Its stench surpassed all the trials the soul had suffered until then. A multitude of wretched souls was falling on to this red-hot metal plate, and there they burnt until completely melted like cream which is reduced in a skillet. Then, what is even more painful, they were sieved through this metal plate as wax is sieved through a cloth, and their torment was again renewed, this time in the charcoals glowing with fire. On seeing this the soul was greatly frightened and said to the angel: 'Alas, my lord, I beg you please to tell me what sort of evil those souls ever did to have been judged worthy of such torments?' The angel said to him: 'These are the homicides, parricides and fratricides. This is the first punishment for the perpetrators of such crimes and for those conniving with them and, after this, they will be led to places of greater punishment which you will see'. The soul said: 'Shall I endure this torment myself?' The angel answered: 'You merit it indeed, but you will not endure it. For, although you are not a parricide, you are nevertheless a homicide; but you will not be asked to settle this account now. However, in the future beware all the more not to deserve this and worse when you have returned to your body'. And he added: 'Let us leave, for we still have a long way to go'.[20]

CHAPTER FOUR

The punishment for the treacherous and the perfidious

So they went on their way and arrived at a mountain of amazing size, great ruggedness and barren desolation. For those who traversed it there lay a very narrow path. On one side of this path was a stinking, sulphurous and tenebrous fire, but on the other side was icy snow and a horrific wind with hail. Here and there the mountain was ready prepared for the punishment of souls and was full of torturers, so that no passage seemed safe to those who wanted to cross it. The torturers had flaming iron pitchforks and very sharp tridents ready for use, with which they transfixed the souls travelling across and dragged them to the torments. And after being tossed around on the sulphurous side where they suffered their punishment for quite a long time, the wretches were forked out with these instruments and thrown to the side of the snow. And, vice versa, they were thrown from the middle of the hail into the flames of the fire. After seeing this, expecting the worst, he said to the angel who was in front of him: 'I beg you, lord, since I see clearly the traps which have been set for my extermination, tell me how I can approach this path?' He answered him: 'Do not fear, but follow me or precede me'. Then, the angel went ahead and the soul followed him as before.

CHAPTER FIVE

The valley and punishment of the proud

Treading carefully because of fear, they arrived at a very deep valley, most stinking and dark, the depth of which the soul could not see at all, but he could hear the sound of a sulphurous river and the howling of the multitude suffering below. A fetid smoke reeking of sulphur and corpses rose to the heights, and this surpassed all the torments he had already witnessed. A very long plank stretched out across the valley from one mountain to the other like a bridge. It measured a thousand paces in length but one pace in width. No one could cross this bridge unless he were one of the chosen. He saw many falling from it but no one crossing it safely except a priest. This priest was a pilgrim, carrying the palm and wearing the pilgrim's mantle, and he boldly crossed first before all the others. On seeing the narrow path and recognising beneath it the eternal destruction, the soul said to the angel: 'Woe is me! Who will save me from this path of death?'[21] But the other, turning round with a joyous face, answered: 'Do not fear, you will indeed escape this one, but you will suffer another after this'. And, leading the way, he held him and led him safe and sound across the bridge. When they reached the other side of the dangerous path, the soul, happy and feeling safe, said to the angel: 'I beg you, lord, please let me know for which souls are these torments which we just saw'. The angel answered him: 'This most horrific valley is the abode of the proud, and the stinking and sulphurous mountain is the punishment for the treacherous'. And he added: 'Let us go until we reach other sufferings which are beyond comparison with these'.

CHAPTER SIX

The avaricious and their punishment

With the angel leading the way, they set off on a long, tortuous and difficult road. They had been travelling with great effort along the dark path when he saw not far ahead a beast of incredible size and unbearable horror. By its enormous size it exceeded all the mountains he had ever seen. Its eyes were like hills on fire. Its mouth was wide open and gaping and looked as if it could hold nine thousand men in arms. It was occupied by two men most awkardly arranged with their heads turned in opposite directions. One of them had his head up against the upper teeth of the beast, and his feet down against the lower teeth; inversely, the other had his head down and feet up, against the upper teeth. Thus, they were like columns in the mouth which they divided in the likeness of three gateways. An unquenchable flame gushed forth and came divided into three parts through the three gateways; the souls of the damned were forced to go inside through this flame and an incomparable stench came out of its mouth. He could hear the moaning and wailing of a multitude coming from its belly through the mouth, and no wonder, since inside there were many thousands of men and women suffering dreadful torments. Also, in front of its mouth there was a mass of foul spirits who forced the souls inside. But before they went in they suffered many blows with all sorts of clubs and whips. When our soul had watched this awesome and frightening spectacle for a long time, his breath taken away by great terror and fear, he said to the angel in a weak voice: 'Alas, alas, my lord, you are well aware of these things that I see: why do you come near them?' The angel answered: 'Our way cannot be completed unless we witness this torment properly. For one cannot avoid this torment unless one is among the chosen. This is the beast called Acheron, which

devours all the avaricious. This is the beast about which the Scriptures say: "It will swallow a river and will not be surprised and is confident that the Jordan could flow into its mouth".[22] As for the men who are seen set in opposite directions between its teeth, they are giants, and in their time they were so faithful to the beliefs of their own people that their likes have not been found since, and well you know their names. They are called Fergus and Conall'. The soul said to him: 'Alas, lord, something worries me: since you affirm that they were faithful to their beliefs, why did the Lord judge them worthy of such bad treatment?' The angel replied: 'All the punishments you have seen up to now are serious, but you shall see much greater ones before your return'. And when he had said this, he came nearer and stood in front of the beast, going ahead of the soul, who followed him though unwillingly. While they stood together before the beast, the angel disappeared and the unfortunate soul remained alone. When they saw him abandoned, the demons closed in on the unfortunate man like rabid dogs and dragged him with them to the beast's belly, lashing him with their whips.

And had any wise person chosen to notice, he could easily have seen from the colour of the man's face and the complete change in his way of life what terrible torments he suffered there, even if he had kept silent about them. But, since we must strive for brevity, we cannot write all the things we heard. However, so as not to appear to neglect our subject, we wish to list for the edification of readers a few of the many torments he suffered: the ferocity of dogs, bears, lions, snakes and countless other unknown monstrous beasts, the blows of demons, the heat of fire, the harshness of cold, the stench of sulphur, the darkening of sight, the flood of burning tears, the profusion of tribulations and the gnashing of teeth.[23] On experiencing these and similar torments, what could the unfortunate do except blame himself for his past deeds and lacerate his cheeks out of an immense sadness and despair. But while the wretch acknowledged his sin and was in dread of the everlasting torture he deserved, he felt himself to be outside the beast without knowing by what means he came out. And, having lain powerless for a long time, he opened his eyes and near him he saw the spirit of light which had earlier preceded him. Then, rejoicing despite his great weakness, he said to the angel: 'O, my only hope, my comfort unduly granted to me by the Lord, O light of my eyes and staff of my

misery and calamity, how could you ever think of abandoning me, wretched as I am? How can I, poor wretch, repay the Lord for all the favours He has done me.[24] Even if He had never done anything good for me except send you to meet me, how can I thank Him properly?' The angel replied: 'As you said at first and as you know for a fact, divine mercy is greater than your iniquity. He does indeed repay everyone according to his deeds and merits,[25] but He will also be everyone's judge as regards his ultimate fate. That is why, as I have already told you, you must beware never again to deserve these torments when you recover your faculties'. And to these words he added: 'Let us travel to the torments which are ahead of us'.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The punishment for thieves and robbers

Feeling weak as he arose, and trying to steady a tottering step, he greatly desired to follow but was quite unable to do so, for he was badly hurt. But the angel of God touched him and comforted him and leading the way at a brisk pace, he encouraged him to complete the path he had already mentioned. As they went along, they saw in the distance a very large and stormy lake, the waves of which prevented those around it from seeing the sky. In the lake there was a large multitude of bellowing and terrifying beasts which fed only on the souls they devoured. Across it there was a very long and narrow bridge which extended for about two miles in length — for such was the breadth of the lake — and was about the size of a hand in width. It was longer and narrower than the bridge we mentioned earlier on. But this plank was inset with very sharp iron nails which pierced the feet of all who crossed it, so that, as soon as one set foot on it, it was impossible to escape unhurt. Also, all the beasts gathered under the bridge to catch their food, that is, those souls who did not succeed in crossing it. The beasts themselves were so huge that they could most rightly be compared with big towers. Fire was coming from their mouths so that onlookers thought the lake itself was boiling. Tnugdal could see on the bridge a soul weeping profusely and accusing himself of many crimes. He was endeavouring to cross the bridge overburdened by a heavy load of sheaves of wheat. Although suffering greatly due to his soles being pierced by the iron nails, he feared even more falling into the burning lake, where he could see the beasts with their mouths wide open. When our soul saw the inhuman danger, he said to the angel: 'Alas, lord, if you please, I would like to know why is this soul straining to go across under such a weight and also to which souls in particular

does this punishment pertain'. The angel answered him: 'This punishment is particularly fitting to you and your kind who have committed theft, whether extensive or petty. But minor offenders do not suffer in the same way as major ones, unless their petty crime happens to be a sacrilege'. The soul said: 'What do you call a sacrilege?' The angel answered: 'Whoever steals something sacred or from a sacred place is judged guilty of sacrilege. But even more, those who commit this crime while in religious orders are judged guilty of a major sin, unless they reform through penance'. And to this he added: 'Let us hurry because we must cross the bridge'. The soul said: 'You will indeed be able to go across by divine power, but I think you will not be able to take me with you'. The angel said: 'I will not go across with you; you will go by yourself. Also, you will not be able to cross unencumbered, for you must drive an untamed cow and deliver it to me safe and sound on the other side of the bridge'. Then the soul, crying and shedding bitter tears, said to the angel: 'Woe is me! Why did God create me if it were only to suffer such torments? And how will I be able to drive anything across when, wretch that I am, I shall hardly be able to stand up on my own in the face of such peril, unless divine mercy comes to my aid?' The angel said: 'Recall to your memory that when you were in the flesh you stole a cow from one of your good friends'. But he said: 'The cow in question, lord, did I not return it to its rightful owner?' The angel said: 'You gave it back, but only when you could no longer avoid doing so. That is why you will not suffer the full torture, because wanting is a lesser wrong than doing, although both are wrong in the eyes of God'. And with these words, turning around to face the soul, he showed him the untamed cow. 'Here is the cow which you must drive across', he said.

So, when the soul saw that he could not avoid the punishment he deserved, he took hold of the cow and, bemoaning his sin, tried to drive it to the bridge with all kinds of threats. The bellowing beasts arrived, expecting their food which they could see standing on the bridge. But when the soul started to walk, the cow did not want to go with him. Why prolong the story? When the soul was standing up, the cow fell and when the cow was standing up, the soul fell and so they went on, now standing and now falling each in turn until they reached the middle of the bridge. When they arrived there, they saw coming towards them

the man who was carrying the sheaves of wheat. In mentioning him, I do not refer to those about whom it is said: 'When they came back, they did not come back rejoicing carrying their sheaves';[26] I refer rather to those whom the Scriptures admonish thus: 'Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep'.[27] For, like them, they came to meet each other mourning and weeping not embracing one another like truth and mercy[28] or justice and peace. For, the soul who was carrying the sheaves begged our soul not to take his space on the bridge, and in turn our soul beseeched him with every kind of prayer not to block the way which he had already part completed so laboriously. However, neither of them was able I do not say to turn back but even to look back. And they stood there grieving and, as they stood, they covered the bridge in blood from their bleeding feet. They had been standing there for a long time, crying over the sin of their crimes when, without knowing how, each realised he had passed beyond the other. As our soul reached the other side he saw his angel whom he had left behind and who addressed him with these soothing words: 'Welcome to you! Do not worry about the cow any more, because you have no further obligations in its regard'. But when he showed him his feet and complained that he could no longer walk, he answered: 'You must remember that your feet were quick to shed blood, and this is why ruination and unhappiness should rightly be on your path,[29] unless the mercy of the Almighty comes to your rescue'. And after these words he touched him and the soul was cured; then he started to walk ahead of him. As the soul was asking: 'Where are we going now?', the angel answered: 'A most hideous torturer expects your coming. His name is Phristinus and we will not be able to avoid his lodging house. And although his house is always full of guests, the host nevertheless still wants to find more in order to torture them.'

CHAPTER EIGHT

The punishment for gluttons and fornicators

So, having gone through dark and barren places, they beheld before them a house which was open. The house they saw was big, like a steep mountain so huge was it, and it was round in shape, like an oven for baking bread. There was a flame coming out of it which burned every soul it could find for over a thousand paces. Our soul, who had partially experienced a similar torment, was incapable of advancing any further. This was why he told the angel who was guiding him: 'What will I do, wretched as I am? Here we draw near to the gates of death: who will free me?'[30] The angel answered: 'You will indeed be spared the outside flame, but you shall enter the house it comes from'. And as they drew closer, they saw executioners with axes, knives, pruning hooks and twibills, with adzes, augers and very sharp scythes, with hoes, spades and all the other instruments useful to flay, behead, split or mutilate people. These were standing in front of the gates amidst the flames, inflicting all the tortures just described on a multitude of souls. And when the soul saw that the torments were much greater than those he had already seen, he said to the angel: 'I beg you my lord, if you please, release me from just this one torture and I agree to be delivered to all the other torments which will follow'. The angel said: 'Indeed, this torment is greater than any you have already seen, but you have yet to see another one exceeding every kind of torment you could possibly have seen or thought of. Enter this house of torment, for rabid dogs are awaiting your arrival inside'. The soul, all trembling and faltering at the danger, begged with all the prayers he knew to be allowed to avoid this punishment, but he did not obtain what he wanted. However, when the demons saw that the soul had been delivered to them, they

surrounded him and, scolding him with great invective, they tore him to shreds with the instruments described and threw him in pieces into the fire. What should I say of what was inside the house of Phristinus? There was distress and affliction, pain, moaning and gnashing of teeth.[31] Outside was a slow fire, but inside there was an enormous blaze. An everlasting and insatiable appetite for food was present and yet this excess of gluttony could not be satisfied. Also, the souls were tortured by excruciating pains in their sexual parts, and furthermore their sexual organs seemed to be rotten with decay and crawling with worms. And it was not only in the organs of lay men and women that the dreadful beasts entered, but — this is more serious and I cannot say it without deep pain — in those of people in holy orders. So, exhausted by tortures coming from all sides, they were totally unable to gather enough strength to endure this pain. No sex, no condition, seemed to be exempt from these wounds, and — I feared to say it but charity itself compells me — even people in monastic garb, both men and women, were among those being tortured. And those who appeared to belong to holier rules were judged worthy of greater punishment.

Under these unbelievable tortures and similar ones which he endured at length, our soul examined himself and confessed that he was guilty and deserved such torments. But when the power of God decided so, without knowing by what sequence of events, as we already mentioned, he found himself to be outside the torments. He was sitting in the dark and in the shadow of death.[32] He had not been sitting there for long when he saw the light, that is, the spirit of life who had been leading him. The soul, full of sadness and bitterness, said to him: 'Lord, why did I suffer so many terrible torments, wretched as I am? What about what the wise men used to tell us: 'The earth is full of the Lord's mercy'?[33] Where is his mercy and his pity?' The angel answered: 'Alas, my child, a great many people have been misled by this sentence, which they did not properly understand. Although God is merciful, He is nevertheless just. Justice repays everyone according to his merits; mercy allows forgiveness of many offences which deserve punishment. As for you, you have indeed suffered those tortures justly according to your merits, but now you will give thanks when you see the torments He has spared you through his mercy. On the other hand, if God pardoned everything, why would man be just? And if he were not

terrified of the torments, why would the sinner restrain himself? And why would it be necessary for the penitents to repent if they did not fear God? That is why God, who arranges everything rightly, tempers justice with mercy just as he tempers mercy with justice, so that neither can exist without the other. Although sinners who do not repent are mercifully spared while in the flesh, they nevertheless suffer here according to their merits, following the fitting sentence of justice. And, although temporal comfort is withheld from the just for their misdemeanours while they live justly in the flesh, He mercifully lavishes on them wealth lasting for ever with the angels, once they have shed their body. Also, his mercy surpasses justice in so far as no good deed will go unrewarded by Him, but many bad deeds will be remitted. No one is exempt from sin, not even a one night old infant, but many will be exempted from punishment so that the shadow of death will not even touch them'. Our soul, having recovered his strength from this comforting speech, said to the angel: 'While you mention it, could you please tell me something, lord: since the just do not deserve to enter the gates of death, why are they brought to Hell?' The angel answered: 'If you are worried by the question as to why the just, who do not suffer the punishments, are brought to see them, this is done so that, having seen the torments which they are spared by divine Grace, they will burn more fervently with love and praise for their Creator. And conversely, the souls of the sinners who have been judged worthy of eternal torments are brought to the glory of the saints so that, having seen the rewards which they have forfeited of their own free will, they suffer more when they arrive at the torments and so that their punishment increases as they recall the very glory they could previously have acquired. For, no torture is harsher than to be separated from communion with the divine majesty and the holy angels. And this is the reason why the priest whom you saw safely crossing the first bridge was brought to the torments — so that, having seen the punishments, he would burn more ardently with love for the One who called him to glory. For, he was found to be a faithful and wise servant[34] and consequently will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love Him'.[35] After these words he said: 'Since we have not yet seen all the evil things, it will be useful for you to hurry in order to see those we have not yet seen'. The soul said: 'If we are to come

back later to the glory, I beg you to lead me as quickly as possible to the next punishment'.

CHAPTER NINE

The punishment for the monks and religious who fornicate or for people of whatever condition who defile themselves immoderately

So, with the angel leading the way, they saw a beast, very different from all the beasts they had seen before: it had two feet and two wings, a very long neck, an iron beak, and iron claws, and an unquenchable flame spurted from its mouth. The beast stood on a lake covered with ice. It devoured all the souls it could find but, when they had been tortured and reduced to nothing[36] in its belly, it gave birth to them in the lake congealed with ice and there they were again subjected to the same torment. But when they were returned to the lake, all the souls, whether they were male or female, were pregnant, and thus they awaited the appropriate time of gestation leading to delivery. Also, inside themselves, their entrails were bitten in the manner of vipers by the progeny they had conceived, and thus they gestated miserably in the foetid water of the deadly sea thick with ice. When the time of delivery came, they filled Hell with their screaming and howling as they gave birth to snakes. And women, but as I say also men, gave birth not only through the organs nature has established for such a function, but through the arms and chest, and beasts came bursting out from every organ. The beasts they brought forth had burning heads with the sharpest iron beaks with which they tore to pieces the bodies from which they came. These beasts also had many stings in their tails, which were turned backwards like hooks,[37] and they pricked the souls from whom they came. As the beasts wanted to get out but could not pull

their tails after them, they did not ceased thrusting back their burning iron beaks into the body they were coming from, until they had consumed it right through to the nerves and bare bones. The general clamour — the creaking of the ice, the screaming of the suffering souls and the bellowing of the beasts coming forth — rose to the sky in such a way that even the devils, had they in themselves the least flicker of mercy, would rightly have been moved to pity and compassion. The beasts' heads were in all the various limbs and fingers and gnawed at the limbs down to the nerves and bones. Like the asp they had fiery tongues which consumed all their palate and trachea right down to the lungs. The sexual organs of the men and women were like snakes which strove to lacerate the lower parts of the belly and then to pull out the viscera. The soul said: 'Tell me, pray, what kind of evil have these people perpetrated to deserve this punishment which I judge beyond comparison with any I have seen before?' The angel said: 'I told you earlier that people who belong to a holier order are condemned to harsher tortures if they lapse — as, on the contrary, they acquire greater glory if they do not incur this torment on account of their sin. For, this is the punishment of the monks, canons, nuns and all the other ecclesisatical orders who have been proved to be lying to God in wearing the tonsure or the habit. Their organs are consumed by the various torments precisely because they were not kept away from forbidden things. They have made their tongues as sharp as serpents',[38] and this is why they will suffer with burning tongues. And their sexual organs, which they have not restrained from the forbidden coitus of concupiscence, are either turned against themselves or produce fierce beasts for increasing their torment'. And he added: 'We have said enough on this subject. These punishments are especially imposed on those who claim they are religious though they are not,[39] but they will also be endured by those who have defiled themselves with excessive lust. As for you, you cannot avoid this torment precisely because you did not fear to defile yourself immoderately when you were in your body'. After these words, demons arrived in a rush and took the soul away and gave him to the beast to be devoured. And, what the soul suffered both inside, after having been devoured, and in the foetid lake, we do not have to repeat because we have said it before. So, after this torment, while he was giving birth to vipers, the spirit of mercy came

beside him and comforted him with these tender words: 'Come, my dearest friend, you shall no longer suffer these torments'. Touching him, he cured him and asked him to follow him the rest of the way. They walked for a long time but the soul did not know where they were going because, as I have said before, they did not have any light, apart from the brightness of the spirit of life. They went on through terrifying and more dreadful places than the previous ones. The path was very narrow and was continuously going down as if from the top of the highest mountain to an abyss, and the more he went down the more the soul despaired of being brought back to life.

CHAPTER TEN

The punishment for those who accumulate sins upon sins

The soul said: 'Can you please tell me where such a long journey down the abyss can lead us, after all the evil things we have seen, so evil that it would be impossible not only to see but even to think of anything worse?' The angel answered: 'This path leads to Death'. The soul said: 'Since this path is so narrow and difficult and we have seen no one on it except us, why is it that the Gospel says: ''The road that leads to Death is wide and spacious and many take it''?'[40] The angel said: 'The evangelist was not talking about this path but about the way of a forbidden and impure worldly life, for one leads to the other'. So, having gone on for quite a long time and laboured greatly they arrived in a valley, and there they saw many forges of blacksmiths, from which sounds of terrible distress were heard. The soul said: 'Do you hear, my lord, the things I hear?' He answered: 'I hear and I know what it is'. The soul said: 'What is the name of this torment?' The angel said: 'This torturer is called Vulcan, and through his artifice many are brought down to be tortured at his hands. The soul said: ' My lord, do I have to suffer this torment?' The other said: 'You must'. After this word he preceded him and the soul followed him weeping. As they came nearer, executioners came up to them with burning tongs and, saying nothing to the angel, they took hold of the soul who followed him. They grabbed him and threw him into a burning fiery furnace.[41] There, just as one tests iron, the demons were blowing with bellows to test a multitude of burning souls until they were reduced to nothing.[42] And when they had been so liquified as to resemble water, they were impaled on iron tridents and put on an

anvil where they were pounded by hammers until twenty, thirty, a hundred souls had been reduced to a single mass; yet, and this is the worst, they had not perished. They wished for death but they could not find it.[43] The torturers were talking to one another, asking: 'Isn't that good enough?' But others in another building answered: 'Throw them to us so that we can see if it is good enough'. And as the souls were thrown the others caught them in their iron tongs before they touched the ground and, like the first ones, these torturers gave them over to the fire, and so on in the same miserable way: the souls were thrown from here to there, and everywhere they suffered and were burnt until their skin and flesh as well as their nerves and bones were reduced in the flame and the ashes of the fire. As for our soul, he had been tortured in these torments for a long time when his protector came to him and, taking him from the middle of the ashes, he began to ask in the usual way: 'How are you? Were the seductions of the flesh so sweet that you should endure so many great torments for them?' But he could not answer him because he did not have the strength to speak after such a torture. So, when the angel of the Lord saw that he was much weakened, he talked to him gently and comforted him with these words: 'Be strengthened,[44] for the Lord went down to Hell and returned.[45] Therefore, be yourself strong because, although the torments you have suffered up to now were bad, there are greater ones which you will be spared if indeed it be the will of our Redeemer. For, He does not desire the death of the sinner but wishes him to mend his ways and live'.[46] After these words he said: 'All the people you have seen before are expecting the judgment of God, but from here on those who are in the lower parts have already been judged. For, you have not yet reached the lower Hell'. And taking him, he comforted him in the usual way and asked him to set off on the rest of the journey.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The descent into Hell

As they were walking together and talking to one another, the soul was suddenly overcome simultaneously by fear, unbearable cold, a stench never before experienced, a darkness beyond comparison with the previous darkness, trouble and anguish,[47] so that it seemed to him that all the foundations of the earth were shaking, and he was forced to tell the angel who preceded him: 'Alas, my lord, what is this? I can hardly stand on my feet! I am so deeply overwhelmed that I have not even the breath to speak!' As he stood waiting for the answer, for he could not move such was his terror, the angel suddenly disappeared from his sight and he could no longer see him. When the miserable soul saw that he was far lower than all the sinners he had already seen, and was abandoned by his light and solace, what else could he do but completely despair of God's mercy. For, as Solomon says, there was no wisdom or knowledge in Hell where he was going,[48] and indeed he had no counsel since he was lacking God's help. After a long time, alone in such dangers, he heard the shouts and howls of a huge crowd, and a thunder so horrific that neither our humble person could comprehend it nor, as Tnugdal admitted, was his tongue able to relate it.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The lower Hell

As he was looking around to see if he could in any way distinguish where all this came from, he saw a pit like a square tank and from the shaft rose a stinking column of flame and smoke which stretched up to the sky.[49] In this flame there was a multitude of souls, and demons too, who went up just like ashes go up with the flame and, when the smoke had been reduced to nothing,[50] fell down again right to the bottom of the furnace. When the soul saw this great spectacle, he wanted to draw back but could not lift his feet from the ground. Pressed by fear, he kept on trying to do so but realised he was unable to accomplish what he wanted; so, he was filled with great anger and became incensed at himself. Tearing his cheeks with his nails, he shouted out: 'Woe to me! Why do I not die? And why, most wretched that I am, did I not want to believe the Holy Scriptures? What madness caught me?' When the demons who went up with the flame heard this, they immediately came around him with implements used to drag the souls of the poor wretches to the torments. They surrounded him, like bees they surrounded him, and they blazed like a fire of thorns,[51] and they all cried out with one voice:[52] 'O wretched soul, worthy of the punishments and the tortures, where do you come from? You do not know what punishment is because you never experienced any. You will now see a torture worthy of your acts: you will neither be able to escape from it nor will you be able to die in it, but you will burn alive in torture for ever. You will not be able to see or find any consolation, refuge or light, and you will no longer be able to hope for any aid or mercy. For, now you have arrived near the gates of Death[53] and you will be introduced without delay to the lower Hell. The person who has brought you here has deceived you: let him deliver you out of our hands if he can! But you will not see him any more. Grieve, wretched soul, grieve, cry, scream, howl; you will lament with those who lament and cry with those who cry and burn for ever with those who burn. There is no one who would want or would be able to free

you from our hands'.[54] And they were talking to one another saying: 'Why wait any longer? Let us drag him and show him our cruelty. Let us give him to Lucifer to be devoured'. And brandishing their weapons they threatened him with everlasting death. These spirits were as black as coals, their eyes were like burning torches,[55] their teeth were whiter than snow; they had tails like scorpions and very sharp iron nails and wings like vultures. So, as they were boasting that they would drag him with them without delay and that they would sing the canticle of death for him while he cried, the spirit of life arrived and the spirits of darkness fled. Comforting him with the usual words, the angel said: 'Rejoice and be happy, child of light,[56] because you will obtain mercy and not judgment.[57] Indeed you will see the punishments, but you will not suffer them anymore'.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The prince of darkness

Come then, he said, and I will show you the worst enemy of the human race'. And walking first, he came to the gates of Hell[58] and said to him: ' Come and see, but you must know that light does not shine at all for those who are assigned here. You will be able to see them, but they will not be able to see you'. As he approached, the soul saw the depths of Hell. And there, what number and variety of unheard of torments he saw; even if he had a hundred heads and a hundred tongues in each head, he could not have given an account of them all. However, I think it is useful to include the few he related to us. For he saw the prince of darkness himself, the enemy of the human race, the devil, who surpassed in size all the beasts he had seen before. Even the soul who saw it could not compare the size of this body to anything; as for us, we dare not surmise about something that we did not learn from his mouth, but we will report his account such as we heard it. The beast was very black, like a crow, and had the shape of a human body from head to toe, except that it had many hands and a tail. This horrible monster had no less than a thousand hands, and each hand was about a hundred cubits in length and ten in thickness. Each hand had twenty fingers and the fingers were a hundred palms in length and ten in thickness, with nails made of iron and longer than soldiers' spears; the nails on his feet were likewise. He also had a very long and thick beak, and a long and very prickly tail designed to harm the souls with the sharpest of darts.[59] This horrible sight lay crouched over embers placed under an iron griddle and kept glowing by bellows

worked by a countless multitude of demons. He was surrounded by such a large crowd of souls and demons that nobody would have believed the world to have produced so many souls since its beginning. But the enemy of the human race was tied at every limb and every joint of his limbs with very thick burning chains made of iron and bronze. As he remained thus in the coals and was burnt everywhere, he flared up with great anger and, turning from one side to the other, he reached with all his hands for the crowd of souls and having filled his hands, just like the thirsty peasant presses grapes, he squeezed them so that no soul could escape unharmed without being split apart or stripped of his head, feet or hands. Then, as if sighing, he blew hard and scattered all the souls to the different parts of Gehenna and, as he did so, the well which we had mentioned belched forth a stinking flame. Then, when the frightening beast inhaled his breath, all the souls he had scattered were drawn back and fell with the smoke and sulphur into his mouth[60] to be devoured. Whoever escaped his hands was pierced by his tail but, while doing so, the miserable beast always pierced himself and, while tormenting the souls, himself suffered painful tortures. On seeing this the soul said to the angel of God: 'I beg you, my lord, what is the name of this monster?' The angel answered: 'The beast you see is called Lucifer, and he is the first of God's creatures[61] and used to live in the delights of paradise.[62] If he is let loose, he will raise havoc in Heaven and earth and everywhere right down to Hell. This multitude is composed partly of the angels of darkness and servants of Satan and partly of the sons of Adam who did not earn forgiveness. These are the ones who did not hope in God's forgiveness and did not believe in God himself.[63] They deserved to endure such punishments for ever in the company of the prince of darkness because they did not want to commit their words and acts to the Lord of glory, who would have recompensed them with everlasting rewards. Those are the ones who have already been judged, and many others who have promised in words to do good but have refused to do so in acts are still awaited. This punishment will be suffered both by those who deny Christ totally and by those who commit acts of denial like adulterers, thieves, robbers, the proud and those who do not repent properly. First they suffer the minor punishments which you saw before, and they are then brought to these, from which no one, once he has entered, can ever more exit. Here also will

suffer forever the prelates and the mighty of the world who wished to be at the head not to serve but to rule: they did not regard the power given to them to rule and correct their subjects as granted by God, and they did not exercise power as they should have over the people entrusted to them. This is why the Scriptures proclaim: 'The mighty will suffer mighty torments'.[64] The soul said: 'Since you say that power has been given to them by God, why do they suffer because of it?' And the angel said: 'Power, which proceeds from God, is not bad, but what is bad is to use it badly'. And the soul said: 'Why does Almighty God not always grant power to good people so that they would correct their subjects and rule them as they should?' The angel answered: 'Power is sometimes taken away from good people when the sins of the subjects require it, because the wicked do not deserve to have good rulers, and sometimes precisely because the subjects are good, so that the salvation of their souls is provided for in a more certain manner'. And the soul said: 'I would like to know why this monster is called the prince of darkness since he cannot defend anyone and is not capable of freeing himself?' The angel said: 'He is called prince not because of his power, but because of the pre-eminence he holds in the darkness. For, although you have already seen numerous punishments, together they count for nothing when compared to this barbaric torture'. And the soul said: 'Yes, I fully agree; for the mere sight of this pit and the endurance of its stench trouble and oppress me more than all the torments I have suffered before. This is why I beg you to remove me from here quickly, if this can be done, to prevent me from suffering any further. For I see in this torment many relatives and friends and acquaintances whose company I enjoyed in the world but whose association here I deeply abhor. I also know for sure that if divine mercy had not come to my assistance I would suffer these torments no less than them, according to my merits'. The angel said: 'Come, happy soul, return to your resting place, because the Lord has treated you kindly.[65] For, you will no longer suffer nor see these torments, unless you merit them again. Until now you have seen the prison of God's enemies, but from now on you will see the glory of his friends'.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The moderate punishments for the not quite wicked

So, turning around, the soul followed the angel who preceded him, and they were not walking for long before the stench vanished, the darkness was dispelled and light appeared, fear fled and safety soon came back. Shedding his former sadness, the soul was so filled with joy and happiness that he was amazed at himself having changed so quickly, and he said: 'My lord, tell me, I beg you, why is it that I feel myself changed so quickly? For I was blind and now I see,[66] I was sad and I am happy, I have endured an unbearable stench all the way and now I smell no bad odour. I was timid and fearful but now I feel happy and secure'. The angel answered: 'Blessed are you! Do not wonder, for this is the turning-point of the power of the Most High.[67] We shall return to our country by another way.[68] As for you, praise God and follow me!' As they went they saw an extremely high wall, and on the near side of the wall, in the direction they were coming from, there was a very large multitude of men and women enduring wind and rain. They were very sad, suffering hunger and thirst, but they had light, and they did not smell the stench. The soul asked: 'Who are these who live in such an abode?' The angel answered: 'These are wicked, but not very: they have indeed applied themselves to lead a rigorous and virtuous life, but they did not give worldly goods generously to the poor as was their duty, and this is why they have merited to suffer the rain for some years, after which they will be brought to a good resting place'.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The plain of joy, the fountain of life and the resting place of the not quite good

Going a little further, they arrived at a door, which opened to them of its own accord.[69] When they had passed through it, they saw a beautiful meadow, fragrant, planted with flowers, bright and pleasing. In it there was a multitude of souls im- possible to count,[70] and this great crowd of men and women was transported with joy. There was no night,[71] the sun did not set, and there lay the fountain of the water of life.[72] As for the soul, after the terrible and intense bitterness he had suffered previously, he was delighted by the sweetness of the magnificent meadow and, with great devotion, he shouted out: 'Blessed be the name of the Lord now and until the end of time,[73] for, following his countless acts of mercy, He freed me from the doors of Hell[74] and introduced me to the share of the inheritance of the saints.[75] Now I know that the words of the Holy Scripture are indeed true: ''Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what things God has prepared for those who love Him''.'[76] And he added: 'For which souls is this place of rest, and what is the name of this fountain?' The angel answered: 'The people who dwell here are not totally good: they have been spared the tortures of Hell but do not yet merit to be united to the communion of saints. The fountain you see is called the fountain of life: whoever tastes this water will live forever and will never be thirsty'.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The kings Donnchad and Conchobar

Moving forward a little further, they saw lay people who were known to him, among whom were king Conchobar and king Donnchad. When he saw them he marvelled greatly and said: 'Why am I seeing this, lord? These two men were very cruel during their lives and were enemies of each other. How have they deserved to come here and have become friends?' The angel answered: 'They repented of this enmity before their deaths, and that is why it is not held against them as a fault. Moreover, king Conchobar was ill for a long time and had vowed that if he survived he would become a monk. As for the other, having spent many years bound in chains, he gave everything he had to the poor, and that is why his justice remains for ever. As for you, you will tell all these things to the living'. And they went on their way.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

King Cormac

When they advanced a little further, they saw an astoundingly ornamented house, the walls and structure of which were all made of gold and silver and all sorts of precious stones. There was no windows or door, but all who wished to enter it did so. The house was so bright inside that I do not say one sun but many suns seemed to be shining in it. It was very large and round and not supported by columns, and the whole hall was strewn with gold and precious stones. But as the soul was exulting in such a building and looking around, he saw a golden throne decorated with gems and silk and all kinds of ornaments. Sitting on this throne was the lord king Cormac, clothed in garments that not even himself nor any king on earth could ever wear. As he stood there for a while marvelling, many people came into this house to visit the king with presents, and each one of them offered his gifts with joy. And as he continued to stand in front of the king his lord (for he had been his lord when both of them were alive), many priests and deacons came ceremonially dressed as for mass with silk chasubles and other fine vestments, and every place in the royal house was adorned with wonderful decorations. They laid down communion cups and chalices made of gold and silver, and caskets made of ivory, on stands and tables, so that, if there were not greater glory in the kingdom of God the decorations in this house would have been sufficient. All his attendants came to the king, bowed their knees before him and said: 'You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands: happy shall you be and it shall be well with you'.[77] The soul said to the angel: 'I wonder, my lord, how my master here has such a numerous retinue, among which I cannot count a single one of his own while he was in the flesh'. The angel said:

'These do not belong to the household he kept while he was in the flesh. Do you hear not what they proclaim: ''You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands: Happy shall you be and it shall be well with you''?[78] All the people you see are Christ's poor and pilgrims to whom this king generously gave worldly goods while he was in the flesh, and this is why here he will be repaid an eternal reward through their hands for ever'. The soul said: 'I would like to know if my lord the king ever suffered tortures after he left the body to come to his repose?' The angel said: 'Yes, he suffered, and he suffers every day, and he will still suffer'. He added: 'Let us wait a little and we shall see his torment'. They had not been waiting long when the house became dark and all its inhabitants became gloomy, and the king became downcast and stood up crying and went out. As the soul followed him he saw the same multitude he had previously seen inside, with their hands stretched to Heaven and most devoutly praying God with these words: 'God, lord almighty, take pity on your servant as you know and wish'. And looking round he saw the king in a fire up to his waist and from there up dressed in a hair shirt. The soul said to the angel: 'How long does this soul suffers these torments?' The angel said: 'Every day he suffers for three hours and for twenty-one hours, he enjoys his repose'. The soul said: 'Lord, why has he been judged worthy of these and not other torments?' The angel answered: 'He suffers the fire up to his waist because he sullied the sacrament of lawful marriage, and he suffers the hair shirt from the waist up because he ordered one of his vassals to be killed near [the altar of] St Patrick, thus betraying his oath. Apart from these two, all his sins have been remitted'. And after these words he said: 'Let us go up'.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The glory of the faithful spouses

When they had progressed a while further, they saw an extremely high and very bright wall. This wall was of silver, very dazzling and beautiful. Although the soul could not see any door in it, without knowing by which divine power he entered, he found himself inside and, looking around, he saw choirs of saints singing in exultation: 'Glory to you, O God the Father! Glory to you, O Son! Glory to you, O Holy Spirit!' Those who sang, men and women, were dressed with most costly white garments, and they were very beautiful, without blemish or wrinkles,[79] joyful and laughing, always happy and exulting and never ceasing to praise the holy and eternal Trinity. Moreover, the whiteness of their garments was like new snow smitten by a ray of sun. Their various voices sounding in harmony produced tones like a musical song. Luminosity, cheerfulness, charm, joy, beauty, honesty, health, eternity, harmony belonged to them as well as charity. And what can I say about the scent of the meadow in which they were? Its most sweet and delightful odour surpassed all the types of perfumes and aromatic herbs. There was no night there,[80] and there was no trace of sadness, everyone was burning with love. The soul said: 'My lord, I beg you, allow us to stay in this place of repose'. The angel answered: 'You are welcome to it but, although this seems very good, you will see greater rewards for the saints'. The soul said: 'Lord, for what souls are these rewards here?' The angel said: 'For the faithful spouses, that is to say, the men and women who did not defile the conjugal bed with the stain of unlawful adultery and who observed the promise of lawful wedlock; they ran their household well and distributed their worldly goods to the poor, the pilgrims and the churches of Christ. To them,

God will say at the Last Judgment: ''Come, O blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you since the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.''[81] Those who are awaiting this blessed hope and the coming of the great glory of God[82] are comforted in this place of repose. For the sacrament of lawful marriage is an important one.[82] Those who observe it well while in the body will rejoice for ever in this resting place'. And he added: 'We must ascend further to see what is above'. And the soul said: 'Lord, if I have found grace in your eyes, see that I stay in this place of repose. For, if it is your wish, I do not want to go higher but my dearest desire is to remain with these people. I do not seek nor care nor desire to have better'. And the angel said: 'Although you do not deserve it, you will see better than this'. And after these words they departed and went without great effort. For it seemed that exertion did not exist, and as they passed each group of people they all ran to meet the soul with great joy, giving a slight bow and presenting a happy face. They greeted him calling him by his own name, and they glorified God who had freed him with these words: 'Praise to you, God of eternal glory, for you do not desire the death of the sinner but you wish him to mend his ways and live;[84] in your customary mercy, you have been so kind as to deliver this soul from the torments of Hell and to join him to the communion of your saints'.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The glory of the martyrs and the chaste

After they had passed many people in this way, they beheld another wall as high as the first one and made of the purest and brightest gold so that all the souls who saw it found more pleasure in the brightness of the metal alone than in the entire glory they had previously seen. They passed through it in the same way as for the first wall. They could see before them many seats made of gold and gems and all sorts of precious stones and covered in the most costly silk, on which elders were seated,[85] men and women, dressed in silk garments and white robes[86] and tiaras and all manner of finery such as the soul had never seen before but could not even imagine. Everyone's face was radiant like the sun shining at noon, and they had hair similar to gold and, on their heads, golden crowns[87] adorned with gems. Placed in front of them were lecterns of no inferior metal, on which were laid books written in golden letters, and they sang 'Alleluia' to the Lord with a new song[88] and in such a sweet melody that the soul forgot all the past, once he heard their voices. The soul stood in the place where he had first seen the seats of this choir, filled with marvellous delight. The angel said to him: 'These are the saints who have given their body to bear witness to God and have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb.[89] These, he said, are the chaste who, having paid the debt of the flesh for some time, have spent the rest of their lives in God's service, whether by suffering martyrdom for Christ or by crucifying their flesh, with its passions and desires,[90] and leading sober, righteous and godly lives:[91] this is why they merit possession of the crown of triumph. These, he said, are the saints who have become friends of God'.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The glory of monks and nuns

As the soul looked more closely he saw a sort of encampment with many pavilions made of purple and batiste, of gold and silver, and of silk of wonderful variety. From there he heard stringed instruments, pipes, tambourines and citharas resounding together with organs and cymbals[92] and producing in unison all kinds of music with the most delightful sounds. He said to the angel: 'For which souls are these tents and pavilions?' And the angel said: 'This is the resting place of the monks and nuns who have joyously and devoutly offered their obedience as promised to their superiors, who rejoice more in being a subordinate than in ruling, who have relinquished their own will in order to obey the will of others, so that they can truly say: ''You have put men over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you have brought us to a refreshing place''.[93] This is for those who had knowledge of celestial things while they were in the body and not only kept their tongues from evil[94] but, for love of silence, have refrained from saying good things and are able to tell the Lord: ''We were silent and prostrate, we have held our peace even from good,[95] and we obeyed you as soon as we heard you''.[96] These people have thrones and pavilions, in which they never cease singing songs of praise to the Redeemer and bestower of all goods'. And the soul said: 'If you please, I want to go nearer and see those inside'. The angel said: 'Indeed I agree to let you see and hear them, but you will not join them inside. For, they are used to the presence of the Holy Trinity, and once a person has joined them inside, he forgets all the past and knows no further separation from the communion of saints; but no one can do so unless he had been a virgin and deserves to be united with the choir of angels'.

Approaching nearer, they saw inside the tents religious of both sexes who were in the likeness of angels, whose voices seemed to surpass all musical instruments by their sweetness and exquisiteness. Although all the souls he had seen in the previous places glittered with sparkling brightness, the brilliance of these and their delightful odour and their sweetest sonority surpassed every single glory he had seen before. All the instruments produced sounds without been played but their melodious harmony was exceeded by the voices of the spirits, who did not show any effort in the production of the sounds. For, their lips did not appear to move, and they did not even lift their hands to the instruments, yet they produced songs suiting everyone's wish. The firmament above their heads was shining intensely and from it hung chains of the purest gold through which were twined small silver branches interwoven with the most beautiful variety, and from them were hanging communion cups and cruets, cymbals and bells, lilies and small golden balls. In between them was an immense throng of flying angels who had golden wings and flew between the chains in a nimble flight and produced for those who were listening the sweetest and most exquisite sound.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The protectors and builders of churches

As the soul, delighted with the vision of these things, desired to stay there, the angel said to him: 'Turn around and look!' And, turning around, he saw a very big and wide tree, verdant with foliage and flowers and abounding with fruits of all sorts. In its foliage there lived many birds of various colours and different voices singing chants and descants, and under its branches countless lilies and all types of herbs and odoriferous spices were growing. Under this tree there were many men and women in cells made of gold and ivory who never ceased to praise and bless God Almighty for his universal favours and gifts. Each had on his head a golden crown adorned in a wonderful way, and each held a golden sceptre in his hand, and they were dressed with garments such as those worn by the monks described above. The soul turned to the angel and said: 'What is this tree, and who are the souls who are underneath it? What kind of good did they do while they were in the flesh?' The angel said: 'This tree is the allegory of the holy Church, and the men and women who are under it are the builders and the defenders of the holy churches. They have striven to build or defend churches and, for the favours which they bestowed on holy churches, they have been welcomed into their religious confraternities, and through the admonitions of the religious, they left the secular condition and restrained themselves from carnal desires which wage war against the soul. They lead sober, righteous and godly lives in this present world,[97] awaiting the blessed hope[98] which, as you see, has not failed them'. And he added: 'Let us move forward'.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The glory of the virgins and the nine orders of angels

After setting off, they saw a wall whose height, beauty and brightness were unlike the others. It was strongly built from all the precious stones of various colours with metal set in between, so that it appeared to have gold for mortar. Its stones were crystal, chrysolite, beryl, jasper, hyacinth, emerald, sapphire, onyx, topaz, sard, chrysoprase, amethyst, turquoise and garnet. This wall, glittering with all these and similar stones, aroused great love for it in the minds of those who saw it. As they climbed the wall, they saw without a doubt that the eye has not seen nor ear heard nor has it entered into the heart of man what things God has prepared for those who love Him.[99] For, there they saw the nine orders of blessed spirits, that is, angels, archangels, virtues, principalities, powers, dominations, thrones, cherubim and seraphim. They also heard words that cannot be told, which man neither can nor is allowed to utter.[1] The angel said to the soul: 'Listen, O child, and consider and incline your ear, and forget your own people and your father's house, for the king will desire your beauty'.[2] What more should I say? It is obvious to everyone how pleasant, charming, dignified and sublime it is to be among the choirs of holy angels, to contemplate the laudable number of patriarchs and prophets, to see the white host of the martyrs, to hear the new song of the virgins,[3] to look at the glorious choir of the apostles and, what exceeds all joy, to behold the clement and benevolent One who is the bread of angels[4] and the life of all. From the place where they stood they could see not only all the glory they had already seen but the tortures of the punishments we have previously described and, what is

even more wonderful, they were able to contemplate the whole earth as if under a single ray of sun. For nothing could weaken one's view of creation once one has been granted to see the Creator of all. And in a marvellous way, while they stood in the same place without turning in another direction, they saw from this very same place everything that was both in front of and behind them. He was also given not only vision but extraordinary knowledge, so that he had no more need to inquire about anything but knew clearly and fully everything he wanted.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

St Rúadán the confessor

As he was standing, St Rúadán the confessor came to him and greeted him with great joy, and, embracing him heartily, from the entrails of charity, he told him: 'May the Lord preserve your coming in and your going out from this time forth and for ever more.[5] I am Rúadán your patron, to whom you owe your burial by right'. And when he had said this, he stood there, saying no more.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

St Patrick and four known bishops

As he looked around, he saw St Patrick, the apostle of the Irish, with a great crowd of bishops, among whom he saw four who were known to him, that is, Celestine, archbishop of Armagh, and Malachy who succeeded him in the archbishopric. The latter came to Rome at the time of Pope Innocent and was established by him as legate and archbishop; he distributed everything he had to holy monasteries and to the poor; he was the builder of fifty-four congregations of monks, canons and nuns to whom he provided all the necessities of life and kept nothing at all for himself. There the soul also saw Christianus, bishop of Louth, the uterine brother of Malachy, a man of wonderful restraint and a lover of voluntary poverty, and Nemias, bishop of the see of Cloyne, a simple and modest man who shone above all by his wisdom and chastity. He recognised these four bishops. Beside them there was a wonderfully adorned seat in which no one was seated. The soul said: 'Whose seat is this, and why is it thus empty?' Malachy answered him: 'This chair belongs to one of our brothers who has not yet migrated from the body but, when he does so, he will sit in this seat'. As the soul was filled with utter delight at all these things, the angel of the Lord who had preceded him came to him and, addressing him gently, said to him: 'Have you seen all these things?' The soul answered: 'I see; lord, I beg you, allow me to stay here'. But the angel said: 'You must go back to your body and retain in your memory everything you saw, for the benefit of your neighbour',

The return of the soul to the body

When the soul heard that he had to go back to the body, he answered in great sorrow and weeping: 'Lord, what terrible evil have I ever done that I must go back to my body, leaving behind such glory?' The angel said: 'Nobody merits to enter this place but virgins who have kept their body from contact with carnal desire and who prefer to be burnt for such great glory than to be defiled by shameful wallowing in concupiscence. But you did not want to believe the words of the Scripture, and this is why you will not be able to stay here. So, go back to the body you came from and apply yourself to abstinence from your former activities. However, our counsel and aid will not be lacking and will remain with you faithfully and actually'. After the angel had said this, the soul turned around and, as he tried to move, he immediately felt weighed down by the mass of his body. Then he opened weak bodily eyes and, sighing and saying nothing, he gazed at the clerics who were around him. Having received the Lord's body with thanksgiving, he distributed everything he had to the poor and ordered the sign of the cross to be applied to the clothes he wore. After a while he related to us everything he had seen and warned us to lead a good life, and he preached the word of God, which he had not known before, with great devotion, humility and knowledge. As for us, since we cannot imitate his life, we have at least applied ourselves to write these things for the benefit of the readers. This is why, O illustrious G., we beg your clemency with the most humble and dedicated prayer to keep the memory of us, however unworthy, in your prayers, provided we find favour with the One who rules all the things we described above, Jesus

Christ our Lord, to whom belong honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

End of the vision of a Knight called Tnugdal

Notes

Sources of biblical quotations in the text of the Vision

1 Matthew 20, 16
2 Proverbs 29, 22
3 II Corinthians 2, 15
4 I Samuel 15, 22
5 II Corinthians 9, 7
6 II Corinthians 11, 19
7 II Corinthians 11, 1
8 Psalms 77, 39
9 Psalms 70, 20
10 Psalms 111, 9
11 Acts 7, 54
12 Proverbs 6, 13-14
13 Ezekiel 33, 11
14 Psalms 17, 6
15 James 2, 13
16 Psalms 72, 9
17 Matthew 16, 27; Revelation 2, 23
18 IV Kings 6, 16; Romans 8, 31
19 Psalms 90, 7-8
20 III Kings 19, 7
21 Romans 7, 24
22 Job 40, 23
23 Matthew 8, 12
24 Psalms 115, 3
25 Romans 2, 6
26 Psalms 125, 6
27 Luke 6, 25
28 Psalms 84, 11
29 Psalms 13, 3
30 Psalms 106, 18
31 Isaiah 35, 10; Matthew 8, 12
32 Psalms 106, 10
33 Psalms 32, 5
34 Matthew 24, 45-46
35 James 1, 12
36 Psalms 77, 59
37 cf Revelation 9, 10
38 Psalms 139, 4
39 cf Revelation 2, 2; 2, 9
40 Matthew 3, 17
41 Daniel 3, 17
42 Psalms 77, 59
43 Revelation 9, 6
44 Joshua 1, 7
45 I Samuel 2, 6
46 Ezekiel 33, 11
47 Psalms 118, 143; Romans 2, 9
48 Ecclesiastes 9, 10
49 cf Revelation 9, 2; 14, 11
50 Psalms 77, 59
51 Psalms 117, 11-12
52 Acts 19, 34
53 Psalms 106, 18
54 Daniel 3, 17
55 Revelation 9, 10
56 Lamentations 4, 21
57 James 2, 13
58 Matthew 16, 18
59 Revelation 9, 10
60 cf Revelation 9, 18
61 Job 40, 14
62 Ezekiel 28, 13
63 Psalms 77, 22
64 Wisdom 6, 7
65 Psalms 114, 7
66 John 9, 25
67 Psalms 76, 11
68 Matthew 2, 12
69 Acts 12, 10
70 Revelation 7, 9
71 Revelation 21, 25
72 Revelation 21, 6
73 Psalms 112, 2
74 Matthew 16, 18
75 Colossians 1, 12
76 I Corinthians 2, 9
77 Psalms 127, 2
78 Psalms 127, 2
79 Ephesians 5, 27
80 Revelation 21, 25
81 Matthew 25, 34-35
82 Titus 2, 12-13
83 Ephesians 5, 32
84 Ezekiel 33, 11
85 Revelation 4, 4
86 Revelation 7, 9
87 Revelation 4, 4
88 Revelation 5, 8
89 Revelation 7, 14
90 Galatians 5, 24
91 Titus 2, 12
92 Psalms 150, 3-5; Genesis 4, 21
93 Psalms 65, 12
94 Psalms 33, 14
95 Psalms 38, 3
96 Psalms 17, 45
97 I Peter 2, 11
98 Titus 2, 12-13
99 I Corinthians 2, 9
1 II Corinthians 12, 4
2 Psalms 44, 11-12
3 cf Revelation 14, 3-4
4 Psalms 77, 25
5 Psalms 120, 8

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